

For immediate release
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Contact: Gary Overmier
Phone: 734-971-9135
E-mail: garyo@glc.org

Great Lakes restoration funding targets soil erosion in key watersheds

Ann Arbor, Mich. – President Obama’s Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is targeting \$5 million to watersheds that are heavily impacted by soil erosion and sedimentation. The grant funding will be made available to local watershed organizations by the Great Lakes Commission under its Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

Under the recent GLRI award, watershed projects can receive up to \$800,000 to provide technical and financial assistance to install conservation practices in priority watersheds to reduce erosion and sediment entering the Great Lakes. Thirty-two applications were received in response to a pre-proposal request. Five to eight projects are expected to be funded for a three-year effort.

“The Great Lakes are one of our most precious natural resources, and we must do everything we can to protect water quality, especially from the pollution caused by eroding soils and sediments,” said Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, chair of the Great Lakes Commission. “This much-needed funding will ensure that the Great Lakes Basin Program can continue to protect these waters for future generations.”

The GLRI funding builds on and accelerates ongoing efforts to reduce soil erosion from tributaries to the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Commission recently awarded \$275,000 under the Basin Program for 10 smaller scale projects selected under an ongoing cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

According to NRCS Chief Dave White, “This cooperative agreement allows NRCS and the Great Lakes Commission to take an already effective partnership to the next level, with the goal of accelerating ongoing efforts to control soil erosion and sedimentation in the Great Lakes Basin. This expanded investment in conservation on the region’s working lands will yield significant dividends for taxpayers and communities, in the form of decreased pollution and better water quality.”

“The Great Lakes are one of our nation’s most valuable natural resources, and it is our responsibility to preserve and protect them for future generations,” said U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan. “These

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Great Lakes Commission

Gov. Patrick Quinn (IL), Chair; Tim A. Eder, Executive Director
Eisenhower Corporate Park • 2805 S. Industrial Hwy. Suite 100 • Ann Arbor, Michigan • 48104-6791
734-971-9135 • Fax: 734-971-9150 • Web: www.glc.org
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funds will enable local organizations to undertake essential projects that will help to clear up erosions and sediments from our waterways. In Michigan, this grant will create partnerships such as those between DNR, conservation districts and Michigan land owners that strengthen our ability to protect the Shiawassee River in Saginaw and correct road crossings contributing to water pollution in Lawrence.”

The Great Lakes Basin Program is a unique federal-state partnership to protect and improve Great Lakes water quality by reducing soil erosion and controlling sedimentation. The program provides grants to state and local governments and nonprofit groups to implement soil erosion and sediment control projects within the Great Lakes Basin. It is administered by the Great Lakes Commission in cooperation with a regional task force with state and federal representation. The program was established in 1991 and reauthorized in the 2007 Farm Bill.

To date, the Basin Program has supported more than 400 projects and invested over \$14 million in water quality improvement efforts, with more than \$10 million in additional nonfederal matching funds applied to the projects. In the process, the program has involved hundreds of community volunteers in watershed improvement projects, improved local ecosystems, and built support for ongoing environmental restoration efforts. These projects have prevented an estimated 1.6 million tons of sediment and 6 million pounds of phosphorus from entering the Great Lakes and tributaries.

The 10 Basin Program grants selected for FY2010 funding (previous to the GLRI announcement) involve erosion and sediment control projects in all eight Great Lakes states ranging in scale from \$17,700 to \$30,000. They are identified in the following list, pending the signing of grant agreements. Visit <http://www.glc.org/basin/projects.html> for information on past projects funded by the Great Lakes Basin Program.

Kellogg Creek Erosion and Sediment Control – Illinois

\$30,000

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Spring Grove, IL

Contact: Brad Semel, brad.semel@illinois.gov

Installation of approximately 300 feet of longitudinal stone toe protection on the outside bends of the stream channel to reduce future streambank erosion. The installed stone toe practice will be inter-planted with native wetland vegetation to provide water quality and habitat benefits. Excavation and grading of the inside bends of the stream channel to provide a more naturalized channel cross-section, reducing erosion pressure on the outside streambanks. The finished floodplain terrace will be revegetated with native wetland vegetation for habitat and water quality benefits and to reduce soil erosion and runoff. Approximately 0.5 acre of enhanced wetland habitat will be created where currently soils are exposed to erosional forces.

Cedar Creek Bank Stabilization Project – Indiana

\$29,293

DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation Project, Auburn, IN

Contact: Allen Haynes ahaynes@co.dekalb.in.us

The two eroding banks will be stabilized using log revetment backfilled with root wads, brush, and clean off-site clay material then stabilized using the live fascine system, shrubs, and coconut erosion control blanket over seeded areas. The existing filter strip on the east side will also be restored and maintained.

Shiawassee River Streambank Stabilization and Inventory Project – Michigan*\$22,670*

Saginaw Conservation District, Saginaw, MI

Contact: *Patricia Copes, patti.copes@mi.nacdnet.net*

Two eroding sites on the Shiawassee River will be restored utilizing soft engineering practices, such as tree revetments and other low cost vegetative practices, which are proven to be economical, effective and provide excellent habitat for aquatic life such as minnows. It is estimated that these two sites combined introduce approximately 213 tons of soil into the Shiawassee River annually.

Partnership for Sediment Reduction from Roads – Michigan*\$17,700*

Van Buren County Road Commission, Lawrence, MI

Contact: *Lawrence Hummel vbcrchummel@comcast.net*

Develop a partnership to jointly implement a demonstration site displaying best practices in correcting a severely eroding road/stream crossing which will reduce erosion and sedimentation by 123 tons per year at 30th Avenue in Covert Township by May 2011. Lawrence, MI 49064

Little Brule/Gauthier Creek Sediment Reduction Project – Minnesota*\$30,000*

Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District, Grand Marais, MN

Contact: *Tristan Beaster, tristan.beaster@co.cook.mn.us*

Water bar diversions and road crowning will be installed at key locations. Additional practices will be the installation of properly sized culverts, road ditch stabilization mulching, and dormant seeding. The erosion control practices will form a total water management plan for the road stem that safely conveys runoff past the road system and into natural stable drainage ways that outlet into the receiving streams. The spring spawning and early summer egg incubation period of rainbow trout in the Little Brule and Gauthier Creek will be free of impact by this upstream work.

Erosion and Sediment Control Program – New York*\$26,046*

Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District, Lowville, NY

Contact: *Michael Durant, mdurant@lewiscountyny.org*

A new bale mulcher will be purchased by the Lewis County SWCD to assist local municipalities with mined land reclamation, roadside bank stabilization, grassed waterway establishment, and recreational trails stabilization. The SWCD will make the bale mulcher available to all public entities with proper training. Match will be required by municipal entities to purchase straw bale material to cover each individual project site.

Reducing Agricultural Soil Loss in the Oneida Lake Watershed – New York*\$30,000*

Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District Hamilton, NY

Contact: *Steve Lorraine, steve-lorraine@verizon.net*

Implement a cover crops program on 500 acres of farmland in the watershed for two consecutive growing seasons. A no-till drill will be loaned to participating farms in order to plant cover crops in the fall after the row crops have been harvested. This practice will be in conjunction with a zone tillage program already in existence.

Controlling Soil Erosion in the Auglaize River Watershed, Paulding County – Ohio*\$29,815*

Ohio State University Extension, Paulding County, Paulding, OH

Contact: *James Lopshire, lopshire.1@osu.edu*

Cover crops of oilseed radish (OR) and small grains like oats or wheat (SG) will be planted on 200 acres of farmland. Each farmer will plant 40 acres of OR, SG, and OR/SG with a demonstration plot 3 to 5 acres in size. Educational field days will be conducted at the sites.

Genesee River Troyer Erosion and Sediment Control Project – Pennsylvania

\$29,500

Potter County Conservation District, Coudersport, PA

Contact: Jack Fleckenstein, j.fleckenstein@pottercd.com

On a sharp bend in the East Branch of the Genesee River years of debris have choked and rerouted the stream to a course which is causing severe erosion and sedimentation to the stream. A mud sill and multi log deflectors will be installed to redirect flows. These types of structures are more cost efficient than previous designs to fix erosion sites and are approved by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Big Spring Creek Stream Erosion and Sediment Control – Wisconsin

\$30,000

Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department, Friendship, WI

Contact: Chris Murphy, cmurphy@co.adams.wi.us

The problem in Big Spring Creek is the streambanks are eroding due to steep slopes and lack of perennial vegetation thus delivering sediment downstream destroying native brook trout habitat. A 30 feet wide floodplain on both sides of the stream will be developed. Also rock, logs and lunker structures on sites prone to erosion during high and normal flows will be installed for the purpose of protecting the streambanks from significant erosion and to create habitat for brook trout. Stream banks and flood plain will be planted with native vegetation to prevent surface soil erosion and create wildlife habitat.

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The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn, is an interstate compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors' appointees, state legislators and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.