



Keeping it on the Land

Information for the
soil erosion and sediment control
community in the Great Lakes region

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New Lake Erie Program Announced

— by Steve Davis, USDA-NRCS, Ohio

On April 18, 2000, Vice President Al Gore and Ohio Governor Bob Taft announced a new partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the state of Ohio to help farmers protect their land while improving water quality. This new partnership, the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), will protect Ohio streams and Lake Erie by reducing soil erosion and polluted runoff to northwest Ohio watersheds.

The Lake Erie CREP is a special conservation program tailored to meet the needs of the state of Ohio. This voluntary program will improve water quality and increase wildlife habitat by reducing sediment pollution. Up to 67,000 acres of conservation buffer areas will be enrolled in the program over the next 10 years.

In addition to reducing runoff of sediment, nutrients and pesticides, the establishment of riparian buffers will also help lower water temperature, increase dissolved oxygen and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

“Through this voluntary initiative, we are protecting the environment, ensuring safer drinking water for the people of Ohio, and helping farmers be even better stewards of the land,” Vice President Gore declared.

Governor Bob Taft said, “I encourage everyone in the Lake Erie Watershed, farmers and non-farmers alike, to get involved in the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This is your opportunity to help ensure that a cleaner, more productive environment is passed along to the next generation of Ohioans. By giving landowners incentives to create waterway buffers, we will help them significantly reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat throughout Lake Erie’s northwest Ohio watersheds.”

The Lake Erie CREP is a state-federal conservation partnership. It is a voluntary program that uses financial incentives to encourage farmers to convert cropland to grass or trees through Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) con-

tracts, typically 10 to 15 years in duration. A key innovative feature in the Ohio program is the increased length of conservation agreements to 20 or 30 years. The longer agreements will be funded by the state of Ohio, which has committed \$34 million to the project over a 10 year period.



Example of native hardwood riparian planting. (photo courtesy of Steve Davis)

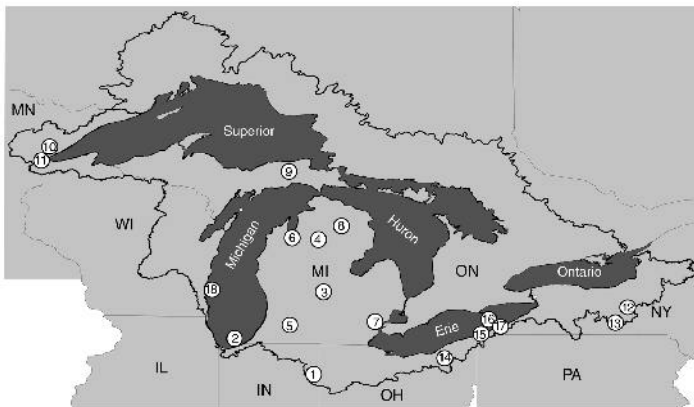
Landowners enrolling in the project will restore wetlands and install grass filter strips, riparian forest buffers and field windbreaks. They will also plant trees and native flora in riparian areas along streams and rivers. These conservation practices have been specifically tailored to meet the needs of

both agricultural production and water quality protection. In exchange for installing these conservation practices, farmers and landowners will receive increased annual CRP rental payments as well as a one-time lump sum bonus funded by the state. The state bonus will be paid in the first year of the contract and will range from \$200 to \$500 per acre. Annual rental payments will range from \$100 to \$220 per acre, depending on contract length and type of cover. USDA has committed \$167.5 million to the project, while the state of Ohio has committed \$33.5 million.

The program is a joint effort of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Divisions of Soil & Water Conservation, Wildlife and Forestry; the USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service; and local soil and water conservation districts. Private conservation organizations, most notably Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited, have also been involved in the project and were instrumental in obtaining a state commitment for Ohio’s share of the funding.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for USDA and the State of Ohio to demonstrate continued commitment to conservation stewardship of our natural resources,” said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. “This marks for the nation, Ohio and its agriculture a turning point for improving the quality of the Lake Erie watershed.”

FY2000 Great Lakes Basin Program Projects



The Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control is a state-federal partnership involving the Great Lakes Commission, USDA-NRCS and USEPA. Annual grants are made by a regional task force for demonstration and information/education projects. Grants awarded for FY2000 under this highly competitive program are described below.

INDIANA

1. Forestry BMP Implementation in the Great Lakes Basin

Indiana Department of Natural Resources; \$24, 300

This project is focused on increasing awareness and implementation of forestry best management practices in Indiana's Great Lakes basin counties. As a result, erosion and sedimentation from timber harvesting should be reduced and water quality in forested watersheds will be improved. Contact Joe Tutterrow, 317-232-4115.

2. Lower St. Joseph River Vegetative Buffer Project

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative; \$24, 605

The goal of this project is to increase the number of agricultural buffers in the St. Joseph River watershed in order to decrease the amount of sediment, pesticides, nutrients and pathogens delivered to the river, the Ft. Wayne water filtration plant and Lake Erie. Contact April Ingle, 219-426-4637 x 3.

MICHIGAN

3. Erosion and Sediment Control on non-Agricultural Property

Clinton County Conservation District; \$19, 760

The conservation district will promote buffer and filter strip implementation in the Stony Creek watershed on non-cropland property otherwise ineligible for assistance through federal programs. Contact Christine Corgan, 517-224-8769.

4. Great Lakes Better Backroads Initiative, Phase III

Huron Pines Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc.; \$20, 000

The initial phase of this project began with a 1997 Great Lakes Basin Program grant to develop workshops and accompanying manuals outlining best management practices for road stream crossings and directed at county road commissions. This phase targets road construction carried out by other entities. Contact Brian Benjamin, 517-348-9319.

5. Industrial Site Erosion Control with Native Prairie Grass Plantings

Kalamazoo Conservation District; \$17, 853

A highly eroding industrial site along the Kalamazoo River in Kalamazoo, Mich., will be restored incorporating native tallgrass prairie plantings. By comparing traditional mixed grasses with the tallgrass plantings, project personnel will be able to assess the efficacy of this method for industrial site restoration. Contact Kathy Buckham, 616-327-1258.

6. Sediment Reduction on the South Branch of the Boardman River

Grand Traverse Conservation District; \$21, 160

The goal of this project is to restore a severely eroding road crossing site on the South Branch of the Boardman River in order to slow filling of a sand trap on the stream. The work will eliminate an estimated 30 tons of sediment entering the river at this point and improve fishing success on this "Blue Ribbon" trout stream. Contact Steve Largent, 231-941-0960.

7. Soil Erosion Practices along Detroit's Urban Waterfront

Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority; \$25, 000

This project will utilize a portion of Gabriel Richard Park as a training field and demonstration project to develop soft engineered shoreline treatments while, simultaneously, engaging a range of community stakeholders in the project. Contact John Kerr, 313-331-3842.

8. Thunder Bay River Watershed Habitat and Protection Project

Montmorency Conservation District/Thunder Bay River Restoration Committee; \$12, 976

Eight eroding sites along the upper end of the main branch of the Thunder Bay River will be restored using revetments as well as seeding and planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses. Contact Donna Hardies, 517-785-4083.

FY2000 Great Lakes Basin Program Projects

9. Upper Tahquamenon River Restoration Project

Tahquamenon Sportsman's Club; \$4, 270

The Tahquamenon Sportsman's Club will identify and remove fallen trees that are exacerbating streambank erosion in the upper reaches of the river and impacting the quality of trout habitat. Contact Paul Ross, 517-742-4225.

MINNESOTA

10. Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings

Minnesota Erosion Control Association; \$7, 500

The project team will hold two seminars to train representatives of local governments, loggers and others in environmental practices for road crossing design. The workshops will include field trips to view *in situ* examples and a take-home manual of environmental guidelines outlining actions to protect fish habitat. Contact Mark Nelson, 218-723-4752.

11. Miller Creek Wetland Inventory and Functional Analysis

South St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District; \$9, 675

The conservation district will conduct a wetland inventory and functional analysis in the Miller Creek watershed of the Lake Superior basin in order to identify and protect wetlands that retain and stabilize sediment in the watershed. Contact R.C. Boheim, 218-723-4867.

NEW YORK

12. Erosion and Sediment Control: Cayuga Lake Watershed

Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District; \$20, 250

In order to facilitate no-till agriculture among the farmers in the Cayuga Lake watershed, the conservation district will purchase a no-till grass seeder for rental to farmers in the watershed. This will enable farmers, who are very interested in developing no-till plots, to do so without the heavy economic investment associated with new equipment. Contact Craig Schutt, 607-257-4320.

13. Road Ditch Geotextile Demonstration Projects

Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District; \$20, 000

The project team will conduct a series of demonstrations using geotextile materials to stabilize eroding highway ditches. These demonstration sites will then be used to teach county and town highway superintendents about geotextile uses. Contact Mark Watts, 607-739-2009.

OHIO

14. Urban Stormwater Wetland Sampling Demonstration

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District; \$21, 225

The goal of this project is to determine the effectiveness of stormwater wetlands in removing nonpoint source pollutants from concentrated urban stormwater runoff. It will help determine if stormwater wetlands are an effective way to reduce sediment, nutrients and toxic chemicals from urban runoff. Contact Dave Ritter, 330-929-2871.

PENNSYLVANIA

15. Cascade Creek Bank Stabilization and Erosion Control

Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority; \$24, 000

This project will reduce soil erosion and sedimentation occurring in Cascade Creek by using natural materials and bio-engineering methods to stabilize land above the streambank. This area will also serve as a demonstration site for other regional watershed groups and provide key habitat in the area. Contact Thomas Maggio, 814-455-7557.

16. Design and Evaluation of a Sediment Basin Dewatering Device

Pennsylvania State University; \$27, 734

The goal of this project is to design and evaluate a dewatering control device that can be used in place of a traditional principal spillway on sedimentation basins. The proposed device will limit outflow when the basin's water depth and sediment is greatest and increase outflow when the water depth and sediment concentration are smallest. Contact Albert Jarrett, 814-865-5661.

17. Headwaters Park Educational Monitoring Station Proposal

Erie County Conservation District; \$24, 000

A goal for Headwaters Park is to have it serve as an educational facility to demonstrate best management practices. This project will install a permanent water quality monitoring station that will be used both to instruct school groups and to hold professional training sessions about stream assessment techniques. Contact LeRoy Gross, 814-796-6760 x 5.

WISCONSIN

18. Demonstration of Streambank Stabilization from Submerged Vanes

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; \$25, 000

This project will demonstrate the ability of an instream technique, submerged vanes on the channel bed, to reduce bluff erosion along a flashy, high-energy stream. Contact Kim Walz, 608-264-9220.

Of Interest ...

Workshops and Conferences

If you have an addition to
this calendar, please contact
Jennifer Read at 734-665-9135
or jread@glc.org

July

8-12 2000 SWCS Annual Conference
"Gateway to the Future Conserving Private Land,"
St. Louis, Missouri
Contact: Sara Fast, 573-751-4932
E-mail: nrfasts@mail.dnr.state.mo.us

9-11 NACD North Central Regional Meeting
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan
Contact: Robert Raschke, 303-988-1810

9-12 WATERSHED 2000
Vancouver, British Columbia
Contact: WEF Member Services, 800-666-0206
E-mail: msc@wef.org
Web: http://www.wef.org/docs/WATERSHED_2000.htm

15-27 Grand River Expedition 2000
Grand River, Michigan
Contact: Mike Smith
E-mail: mjsmith@power-net.net
Web: <http://www.grand-river2000.org>

August

6-12 6th International Wetland Symposium
Quebec City, Quebec
Contact: Elizabeth MacKay, 418-657-3853
E-mail: cqvb@cqvb.qc.ca
Web: <http://www.cqvb.qc.ca/wetland2000/>

27-30 AWRA Summer Speciality International Conference
Portland, Oregon
Contact: American Water Resources Association,
703-904-1225
E-mail: awrahq@aol.com
Web: <http://www.awra.org>

29-31 Carbon: Exploring the Benefits to Farmers
and Society
Des Moines, Iowa
Contact: Alice Vinsand, 515-225-1051
E-mail: avinsand@aol.com
Web: <http://www.cvr.cd.org/carbon.htm>

World Resources Institute announces the upcoming release of a new report, *Fertile Ground: Nutrient Trading's Potential to Cost-Effectively Improve Water Quality* by Paul Faeth. The report documents case studies in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota that explore the cost-effectiveness and environmental performance of various strategies to reduce phosphorus loads in nutrient-impaired waterways. The report will be released in Washington, D.C., on May 24, 2000, and will be available, beginning that day, at the World Resources Institute web site at <http://www.wri.org>. For further information, please contact Paul Faeth at 202-729-7688.



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Great Lakes Commission
Argus II Building, 400 Fourth Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-4816

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