



Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control

Legislative Priority Fact Sheet
February 2008



Background on the Issue

Soil erosion and sedimentation are the primary source of land-based nonpoint source pollution, including a major source of nutrients and toxic chemicals, to the Great Lakes system. Beyond water quality degradation, sedimentation reduces agricultural productivity, degrades fish and wildlife habitat, limits water-based recreation, reduces harbor capacity, and damages water treatment and public water supply infrastructure.

In an effort to combat erosion and sedimentation, Congress authorized the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to address one of the primary environmental problems in the Great Lakes basin. The Great Lakes Basin Program is all about making a difference — in water quality, land use and agricultural productivity. Since its inception in 1991, this federal/state partnership has supported nearly 400 locally sponsored demonstration, information and education projects to reduce erosion and sedimentation throughout the Great Lakes region.



Sediment Plume washing into the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Basin Program is coordinated by the Great Lakes Commission in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Natural Resources Conservation Service), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Great Lakes Commission, established in 1955 as an interstate compact agency of the eight Great Lakes states, is dedicated to the use, management and protection of the water, land and other natural resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. Water quality issues and, in particular, those relating to nonpoint sources of pollution, have been an ongoing priority.

Congressional Priorities for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control

In recognition of the important role this program plays in supporting the conservation of working lands and other upland areas, members of the U.S. Congress should **reauthorize the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in the 2007 Farm Bill**. This program has demonstrated its ability to protect and improve Great Lakes water quality by reducing soil erosion and controlling sedimentation.

In addition, Congress should increase appropriations for Fiscal Year 2009 to the historical levels of \$2.5 million.

Funding History and Committee Jurisdiction

Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control							
Fiscal Year Funding (millions of dollars)							
2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 Budget Request
\$1.25	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.49	\$2.49	---	\$0.43	\$0

Committee Jurisdiction

Current committee jurisdiction for the 2007 Farm Bill reauthorization lies with the U.S. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture.

Progress to Date

Since its inception in 1991, the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control has provided more than \$14 million – a small portion of the actual need – to local units of governments and nonprofit organizations such as conservation districts and watershed restoration councils to fund 389 locally led water quality improvement projects. As of September 2007, the program has prevented an estimated 1.6 million tons of soil and 3,000 tons of phosphorus from entering the Great Lakes.

Benefits to the Great Lakes Region

In taking action to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation, the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control protects the water quality of the Great Lakes, mitigates the environmental and economic damages caused by sedimentation, and sustains the long-term productivity of cropland for food and alternative energy sources. Additionally, the Great Lakes Basin Program increases wildlife habitat through the installation of multi-functioning erosion and sediment reduction methodologies such as wetlands and riparian buffers.

Links for More Information

Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control: www.glc.org/basin