

# Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Pilot Program: Bringing Leaders Together to Heal the Fractured Water Cycle



The **Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Pilot Program** will catalyze the adoption of green infrastructure practices and policies across the region by bringing together green infrastructure leaders and helping them share their knowledge. The Great Lakes Commission (GLC) will create a peer-to-peer mentoring network of “green

infrastructure champions” and emerging communities that will help heal the fractured water cycle in mid-sized municipalities across the binational Great Lakes region.

Physical and institutional barriers have fractured the water cycle, especially in cities. Physical barriers prevent water from cycling naturally, resulting in flooding, sewer overflows, and risks to human health and property. Institutions that manage drinking, storm, and waste water as separate systems — often in separate departments — place financial and administrative burdens on governments, taxpayers, and utility users. Mid-sized municipalities often lack the resources needed to adequately address these issues. This project will focus on building green infrastructure capacity in these mid-sized communities.

With funding from the Erb Family Foundation, the GLC will enable communities with green infrastructure experience to share successes and mentor emerging practitioners in communities that would like to utilize green infrastructure, but lack the capacity to do so. The GLC will bring experienced practitioners together as “champions,” conduct workshops to build a mentoring network, and award small grants to selected emerging communities. The project will also examine green infrastructure policy barriers and opportunities and share the findings with its membership and key regional stakeholders.

A sister project, the Great Lakes Stormwater Technology Transfer Collaborative, is aimed at creating a stormwater technology sharing collaborative. Also funded by the Erb Family Foundation, the two efforts will work in tandem to reduce physical and institutional barriers to a more holistic and effective approach to stormwater management.