Conservation Through Partnerships in the Great Lakes

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Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources
And
Environment
Food for thought…

- 2.4 B more people by 2050
- 63 M fewer acres since 1982
- 70% increase in ag output

Challenge: Sustainable intensification of agricultural production
GLRI is one of 19 Landscape Conservation Initiatives implemented by NRCS
## Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USDA Agency</th>
<th>FY 10</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>FY12</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>APHIS</td>
<td>$1,885,000</td>
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<td><strong>$109,750,000</strong></td>
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</table>
Great Lakes Commission 2010 - 2012

- 3 Cooperative Agreements to implement GLRI priorities through GLC’s Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Project.
- Total funding > $10 million
Great Lakes Commission (NRCS GLRI)

GLC has granted $8.7 million (M) to 29 projects through the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program

- 2010 - $4.3 M to 9 Projects
- 2011 - $2.3 M to 7 Projects
- 2012 - $2.07 M to 13 Projects
Great Lakes Commission

- Results:
  - 1.6 M tons of soil prevented from entering the Great Lakes and tributaries
  - 1.6 M pounds of phosphorus prevented from entering the Great Lakes & tributaries.
  - 3.2 M pounds of nitrogen prevented from entering the Great Lakes & tributaries.
NRCS Success stories from the GLRI Area

Field Border (Buffer) installed in Michigan

Before

After
NRCS Success stories from the GLRI Area

Barnyard project installed in New York

Before

After
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Priority Watersheds Fiscal Year 2012

GLRI 2012 8 digit Priority Watershed Locations

- Phosphorus Focus Areas
- STATE BOUNDARIES
- 8 Digit Focus Watersheds
- Great Lakes Basin
Phosphorus Reduction Watersheds

Collaboration with NRCS, EPA and USGS
Watersheds selected based on existing water quality among other factors

Progress in 2012:
- We have had two ranking periods for NRCS's programs.
- We have established edge-of-field monitoring sites.
- We have started discussions about expanding watershed areas for implementation
National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

• **Goal:** Remove streams and other water bodies
  • from 303d list, or
  • from threatened status, or
  • from contributing to impairments, or
  • to adequately address a TMDL plan.

• NWQI addresses agricultural sources of pollution that NRCS can effectively address through voluntary action of producers:
  • Nutrients
  • Sediment
  • Pathogens (new for FY 2013)
Initiatives have national or regional significance and focus on critical resource concerns at the landscape level.

- Build on existing locally-led efforts and are partnership driven
- Dedicated funding to accelerate implementation
- Science-based
- Focused on performance and environmental outcomes

Landscape Conservation Initiatives
Progress Through NWQI (FY 2012)

- > 750 agreements with landowners
- 154 small watersheds (12-digit HUC)
  - 128 have water quality monitoring stations
  - 82 have 319 projects
  - 68 within Landscape Conservation Initiatives
- 160,000 acres of targeted conservation under contract or agreement in FY 2012
- > $38 million obligated in FY 2012
Strategic Watershed Action Teams (SWATS)

- Six SWATs
- $1.1 million USDA + $366,684 (25%) partner match in Contribution Agreements
- > 30 staff years over several years
Monitoring & Assessment:

New 3-Tiered monitoring and evaluation activity

• To assess environmental outcomes
• Help farmers use adaptive management
  1. Edge-of-field
  2. In-stream
  3. Watershed level (Pour point)
• NRCS cost-shares on edge-of-field monitoring
• Partners help with monitoring stations
• Partners help cover producers’ share of cost
• Partners perform the in-stream and watershed-level monitoring and evaluation
NRCS Edge-of-Field Monitoring and Evaluation

Purposes of Practice

• Provide site-specific field data for input into models to predict practice/system performance and to validate the models

• Sample and measure practice/system performance

• Collect and evaluate data for adaptive management by producer
USGS NRCS Edge-of-Field Monitoring and Evaluation

USGS and NRCS worked together to get monitoring installations on-the-ground and collaborating to get producer buy-in for this effort.
Certainty is a partnership tool to:

- Accelerated voluntary conservation
- Provide reasonable assurance that conservation systems will satisfy current or future regulations for a prescribed timeframe
- Recognize sound environmental stewardship
- Foster innovation
Certainty Progress Across the Country

- Certainty programs for water quality existing or in progress: Minnesota, Virginia, Texas, Michigan, Maryland and Delaware
- Under consideration: Vermont, Oregon, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana
Benefits to Producer

- Improve natural resource sustainability (on-and off-farm)
- Provide piece of mind for fixed period of time
- Maintain priority access to technical and financial assistance
- Increase recognition of farmers role in conservation
- Marketability (labeling)
- Environmental services opportunities
- Reduced insurance rates? Improved access to loans?
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