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A phosphorus credit trading program for the Lower Fox River watershed in Wisconsin is being developed through a new effort under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The three-year project, to commence in April, will be led by the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Pollution in the Lower Fox River comes from diverse sources such as farm fields, barnyards, residential yards, and industrial and municipal wastewater treatment plants. Phosphorus, which will be targeted by this program, is particularly problematic. A trading program will improve water quality in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay by allowing all those who discharge phosphorus into the Lower Fox River to seek the lowest cost option to achieve phosphorus reduction goals. The credits can come from various actions, which may include purchasing pollution reductions from another source or voluntary conservation actions by private landowners to protect and restore priority watersheds.

The GLC will collaborate closely with local and regional stakeholders in the Fox River and Green Bay areas, cities, industries, tribal and agricultural interests, and nongovernmental organizations to build on the years of effort and experience in the watershed. The project will also work closely with the State of Wisconsin, USDA and other relevant federal agencies.

The Fox River project is expected to serve as a model that can be replicated in other parts of the region.

For more information, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document (attached), or contact Victoria Pebbles at the Great Lakes Commission, vpebbles@glc.org.