United States Department of Agriculture

INDIANA
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Helping People Help the Land.

FACT SHEET

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

*The Great Lakes Restoration Initative provides financial and technical assistance to producers in targeted watersheds in the Western Lake Erie Basin area.*

December, 2014

## OVERVIEW

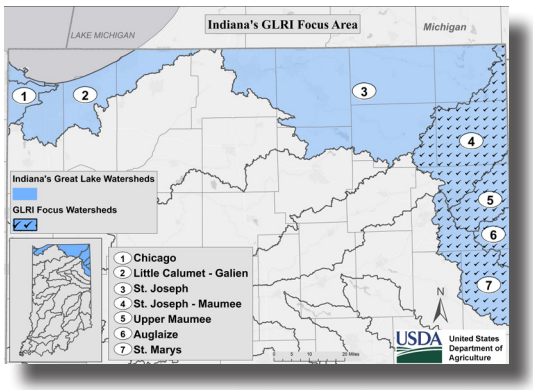
The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) began in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world — the Great Lakes.

Indiana's USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working with conservation partners and private landowners to protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem. Financial and planning assistance are available for farmers in priority watersheds to address critical environmental issues.

## PRIORITY WATERSHEDS

Indiana is targeting GLRI assistance to conservation practices that reduce nutrient reductions in the St. Joseph-Maumee, Upper Maumee, Auglaize and St. Mary's watersheds through Fiscal Year 2016.

As indicated on the map below, the Indiana GLRI focus watersheds are located in the northeast portion of the state.




*Indiana priority watersheds within the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative*

## CONSERVATION FUNDING

NRCS provides dollars to eligible farmers and other landowners to help pay for conservation practices. Producers apply for funds at the local NRCS office. Applications are ranked and those that address priority resource concerns are funded. Funding is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).

## CONSERVATION PRACTICES

NRCS conservationists provide on-farm planning assistance to help farmers determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to improve soil health and water quality on their land.

**Cover Crops:** Crops including grasses, legumes, and forbs for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes.

**Buffers:** Establishing permanent vegetation on sites that have, or are expected to have, high erosion rates, and on sites that have physical, chemical or biological conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal practices.

**Nutrient Management:** Managing the amount (rate), source, placement (method of application), and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments.

**No-Till/Strip-Till:** Limiting soil disturbance to manage the amount, orientation and distribution of crop and plant residue on the soil's surface year **around.**

**Gypsum Soil Amendment:** Using gypsiferous products to change the physical or chemical properties of soil.

*Waste Storage Facility*

**Composting Facilities:** A structure or device that contains and enables the controlled aerobic decomposition of manure or other organic material into a biologically stable organic material that can be used as a soil amendment.

**Manure Storage Facilities:** A waste storage impoundment made by constructing an embankment and/or excavating a pit or dugout, or by building a structure.

**Bioreactor:** A structure containing a carbon source, installed to reduce the concentration of nitrate nitrogen in subsurface agricultural drainage flow via enhanced denitrification.

**Drainage Water Management:** The process of managing water discharge from surface and/or subsurface agricultural drainage systems.

**Two-Stage Ditch:** Drainage ditches that have been modified by adding benches that serve as floodplains within the overall channel.

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Cover Crops - Cereal Rye and Radish

## GLRI PHOSPHORUS INITIATIVE

The Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) watersheds (St. Joseph, Upper Maumee, Auglaze, and St. Marys) located in Adams, Allen and Wells Counties are targeted to receive GLRI assistance.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015 there will be additional assistance available in these watersheds, in areas identified as having high phosphorus loadings to Lake Erie.

As part of the GLRI Phosphorus Initiative additional EQIP funding is available to producers in this area for innovative conservation practices that control phosphorus such as drainage water management, two stage ditches, blind inlets, and denitrifying bioreactors.

NRCS partners are also working in this critical area to meet the needs of farmers. The US Geological Survey will monitor the improvements to water quality as farmers increase conservation efforts and Purdue University will conduct a survey to help identify barriers to using conservation practices. In addition, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture will hire conservationists to work directly with farmers to help them improve their natural resources.

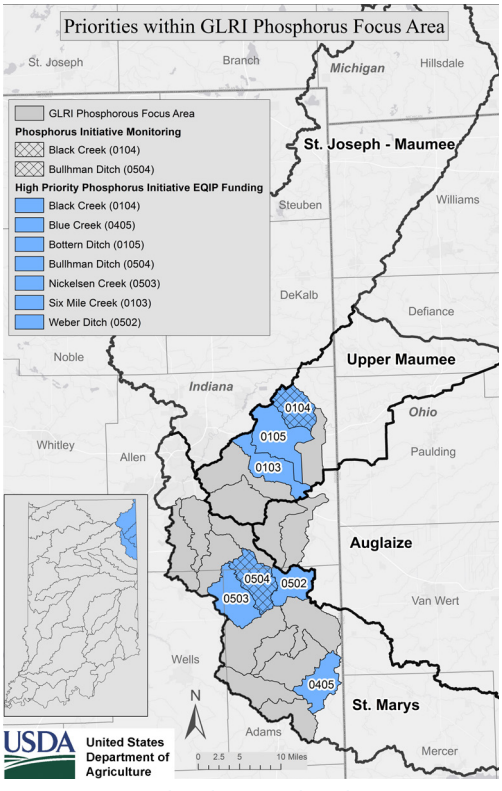
***Across Indiana and the entire country—farmers are voluntarily taking action to conserve natural resources in ways that improve water quality on millions of acres!***

## PRODUCER AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

Conservation investments are good for all Americans because well-managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security.

Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands. The landowners and farmers participating in the GLRI will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water and ensures the land remains productive into the future.

Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife. NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources.



*Priority Areas within the GLRI Phosphorus Initiative*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information about GLRI, visit the Great Lakes Restoration website at: http://www.greatlakesrestoration.us/.

If you would like more information about Farm Bill Programs, check out the Indiana NRCS webpage at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/farmbill/.

For more information about USDA-NRCS program eligibility or applying for a program, please contact your local NRCS office. You can find your local NRCS office by visiting the Indiana NRCS website at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/.

Offices are also listed in the government pages of the phone book under USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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