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News Releases from Region 5

EPA Awards Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grants to Reduce Runoff that Contributes to Algal Blooms

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CHICAGO -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today announced the award of 14 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants totaling over \$17 million to fund projects that will improve Great Lakes water quality by preventing phosphorus runoff and soil erosion that contribute to algal blooms and by reducing suspended sediments in Great Lakes tributaries.

"These Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants will be used for critical projects to prevent soil erosion and reduce phosphorus runoff that contributes to algae growth in the Great Lakes," said Great Lakes National Program Manager Susan Hedman. "Many of these grants target Great Lakes watersheds where there have been harmful algal blooms in recent years – such as Maumee Bay on Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay on Lake Huron and Green Bay on Lake Michigan."

The projects funded by the GLRI grants announced today will be implemented by conservation organizations and by state and local governments:

- Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Inc. (\$4,196,221) will use conservation practices – such as stream buffering and cover crops – in key sections of the Lower Fox River watershed to reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion that impacts Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (\$3,696,182) will retire 270 acres of cropland, restore six miles of streams, stabilize 1,000 feet of eroding stream banks and restore 70 acres of wetlands at eight locations in the Maumee River watershed to prevent phosphorus from entering Lake Erie.

- The Nature Conservancy (\$2,558,853) will administer a program to reimburse farmers for implementing conservation practices (tillage, cover crops and drainage water management) on 10,000 acres of cropland in the Saginaw Bay watershed. The project will reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion that impacts Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron.

- Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District Council (\$1,686,669) will work with partners to implement conservation practices on over 70 percent of cropland in the Duck Creek watershed to reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion that impacts Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

- Western Reserve Land Conservancy (\$750,000) will purchase 1,000 acres of easements in northern Ohio's Grand River watershed -- protecting five miles of streams and 400 acres of wetland -- to reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion that impacts Lake Erie.

- Delta Institute (\$750,000) will lead a coalition of community organizations to prevent nutrient runoff and soil erosion in the Bear Creek/Bear Lake watershed to reduce impacts on the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern and Lake Michigan. The coalition will promote the use of best practices to reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion from farms and urban areas.

- The Stewardship Network (\$745,000) will work with partners to provide farmers in the River Raisin watershed with technical assistance on best practices to prevent nutrient runoff and soil erosion into the river and Lake Erie.

- Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Initiative (\$729,840) will work with two major landowners to restore eroding stream banks and install green infrastructure at Kids Creek-- reducing stormwater runoff and soil erosion that impacts Grand Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan.

- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (\$689,060) will expand agricultural conservation practices to 8,000 acres of cropland in five northern Ohio watersheds that flow into the Sandusky River. The project will reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion into Lake Erie.

- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (\$580,000) will excavate, re-grade and stabilize 900 feet of stream banks along the Menomonee River, which flows through Milwaukee and discharges directly into Lake Michigan. The stream banks are composed largely of building debris which contains contaminants such as asbestos and lead. The project will reduce the discharge of contaminants and sediment into the river and Lake Michigan.
- Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (\$356,970) will work with partners to establish cover crops on 2,000 acres of agricultural land. In addition, buffers will be established on 24 acres of stream banks, and 500 feet of stream banks will be stabilized at community parks. The project will reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion into Tamarack Creek, the Muskegon River and Lake Michigan.
- Superior Watershed Partnership (\$330,403) will restore about 1,500 feet of eroding stream banks at a rural river (Salmon-Trout River) and an urban river (Dead River) in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The project will reduce stormwater runoff, improving water quality in both rivers and in the near-shore waters of Lake Superior.
- Outdoor Discovery Center (\$250,000) will restore over 40 acres of wetlands and floodplain to increase floodwater storage capacity along the Macatawa River which will reduce soil erosion and the quantities of nutrients and streambed sediment entering Lake Michigan.
- Chagrin River Watershed Partners Inc. (\$178,479) will partner with the City of Wickliffe, Ohio, and Cleveland Metroparks on a project to restore 640 feet of streams and wetlands in the Deer Creek/Gully Brook watershed. The project will reduce soil erosion and the quantity of nutrients and streambed sediment entering the Chagrin River and Lake Erie.

This year, EPA has awarded GLRI grants totaling over \$25 million to fund 29 projects to protect and restore the Great Lakes. Earlier this month, EPA announced 15 GLRI grants totaling over \$8.1 million to fund projects to combat invasive species.

Since 2010, EPA has funded more than 700 Great Lakes restoration and protection projects totaling over \$570 million. For more information about the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, visit www.glri.us.