



United States Department of Agriculture

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# Overview of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Chesapeake Bay Program  
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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**9/13/2023**

**Note from Presenter:**

**This presentation include details that may change in the future (e.g., staffing numbers, financial assistance summaries, accomplishments, etc.).**

**For up-to-date information, please reach out to the USDA NRCS POC provided.**



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# USDA NRCS Targeted Conservation Actions

NRCS has developed approaches with federal, state, and private partners to better target conservation for improving water quality in the **Great Lakes Region**.

For example:

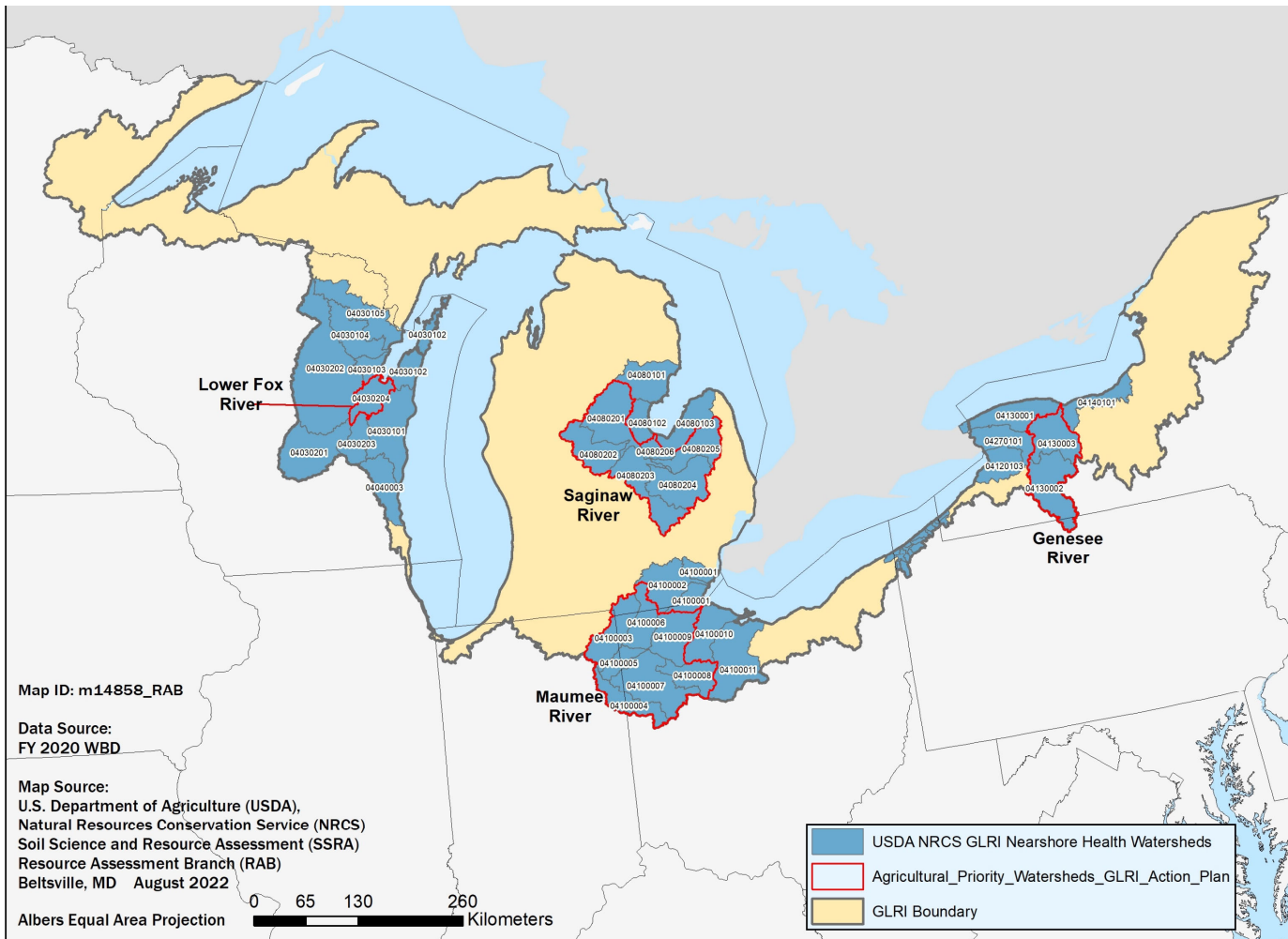
- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program
- **Western Lake Erie Basin Initiative**
- National Water Quality Initiative
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Conservation Innovation Grants



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# Great Lakes Watershed



## Great Lakes

- Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario

## Priority Watersheds

- Lower Fox, WI
- Saginaw River, MI
- Maumee River, MI, OH and IN
- Genesee River, PA

## Other Facts

- Binational Approach – USA and Canada
- Bipartisan support
- 21% of the world's surface fresh water by volume.

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)



- Authorized by Congress, led by EPA, launched in 2010;
- Authorize ~\$300,000,000 per year
- The GLRI is accelerating Great Lakes and public health more than any other coordinated interagency effort in U. S. history.
- Targets areas that could have the biggest impacts on improving water quality;

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Partnerships



# GLRI Action Plans (I, II, III)

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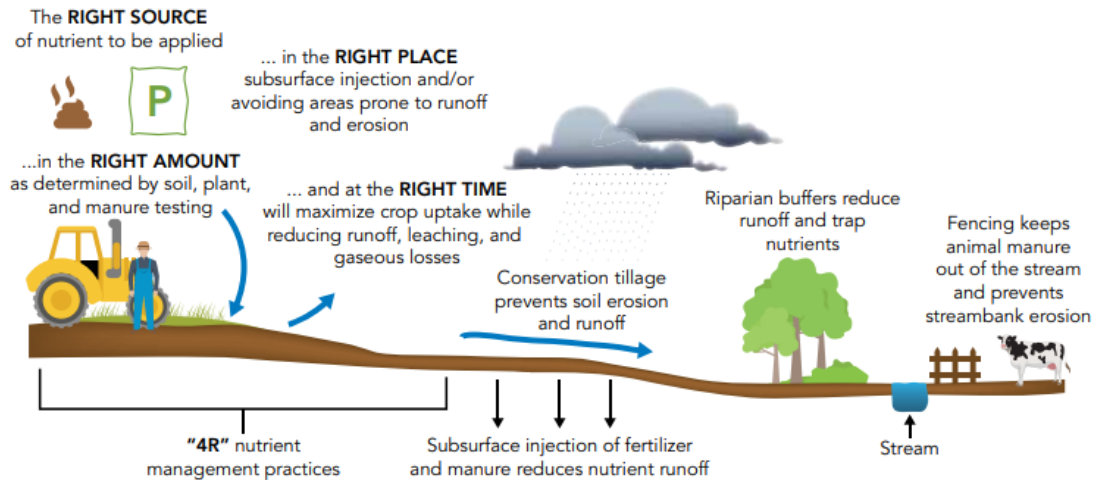
## Principles of Implementation:

- Accountability and Reporting
- Communication and Outreach
- Partnerships and Engagement
- Project Sustainability
- **Science-Based Adaptive Management**



# FY 20 – FY 24 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan

- Focus Area 1: Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern
- Focus Area 2: Invasive Species
- Focus Area 3: Nonpoint Source Pollution Impacts on Nearshore Health
- Focus Area 4: Habitats and Species
- Focus Area 5: Foundations for Future Restoration Actions – **Science**





# Stakeholders Involvement and Impact

- Great Lakes Advisory Board
- State Technical Committee
- Lakewide Action Plans
- Great Lakes Day – Congressional event
- Demonstration Farms
- Great Lakes Stakeholders Forums





# Great Lakes Commission (GLC)



- Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program
- Proposed projects focus on implementing nutrient management programs and reducing sediment and phosphorus runoff into the Great Lakes through the installation of long-term practices.
- The GLC has successfully supported over **131 local projects** within the Great Lakes Region using GLRI funds to control nonpoint source pollution.
- Via agreements, NRCS has provided over **\$27.2M** to GLC for their Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program.



# Fox Demo Farms Pilot Mentorship Program

**Agreement Type:** Contribution

**Partner:** University of Wisconsin Madison

**Target:** Lower Fox Watershed, WI

**Objectives:** Designed to partner **experienced farmers** with farmers who are transitioning to cover crops and no-till practices.

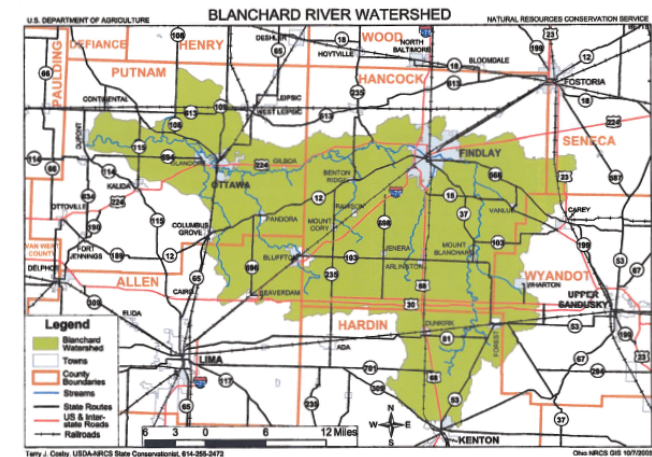
The **mentorship** model provides farmers the extra support they need to adopt conservation practices.

The project is designed to showcase and demonstrate the effectiveness of conservation practices.



# GLRI Demonstration Farm Blanchard River Watershed

- **Agreement Type:** Contribution
- **Partner:** Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation
- **Target:** Blanchard River Watershed, OH
- **Objectives:** Project designed to showcase and demonstrate leading edge conservation practices to improve Great Lakes water quality.



# Phosphorus Reduction in Genesee County, Michigan

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- **Agreement Type:** Contribution
- **Partner:** Genesee Conservation District
- **Target:** Saginaw Watershed, MI
- **Objectives:** Reduce phosphorus from entering into the Saginaw Bay watershed through outreach and technical assistance.

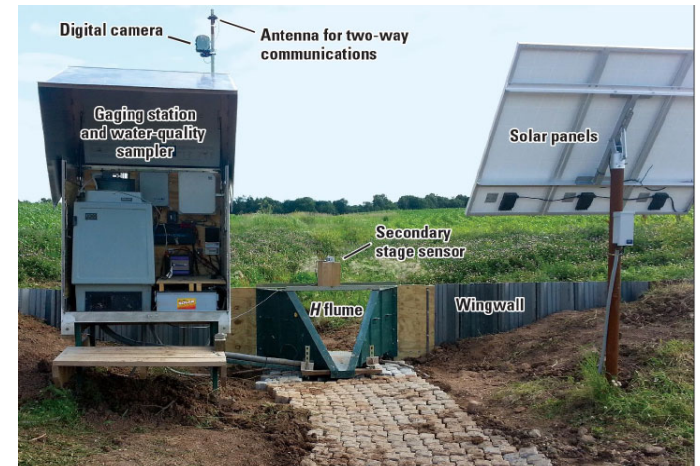
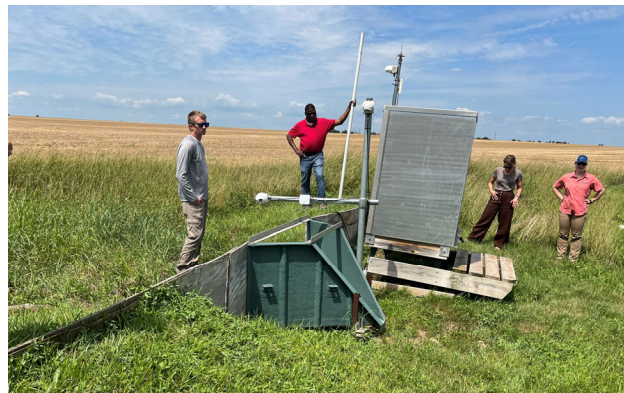
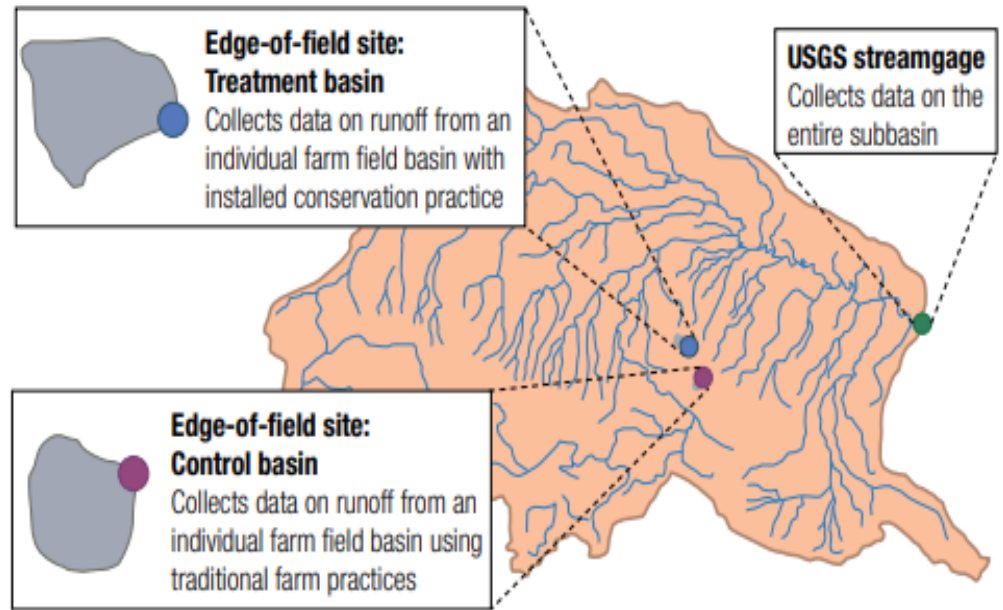


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## Edge of Field Monitoring Stations – Partnership

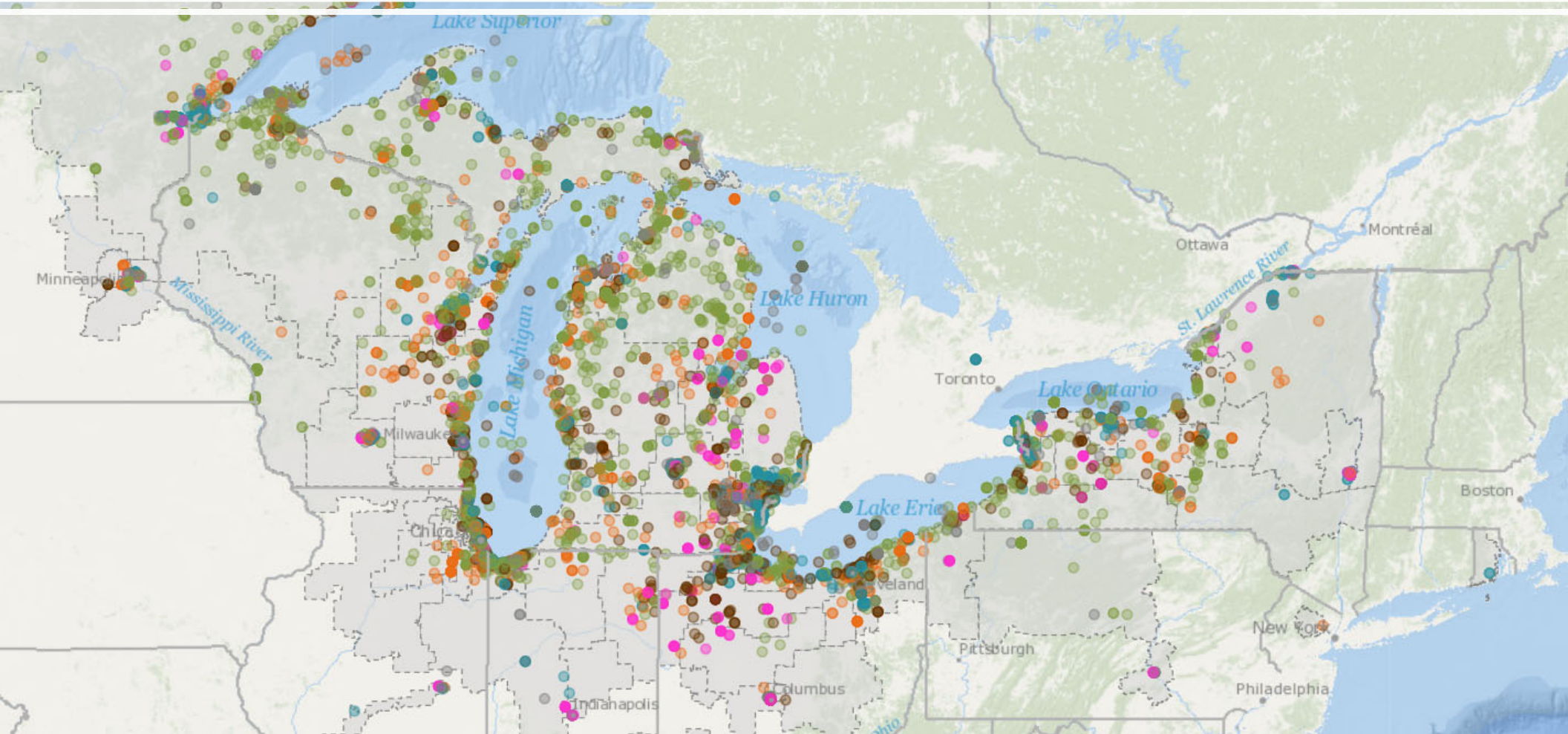
- Evaluate practice effectiveness for reducing phosphorus delivery;
- Guide future promotion or avoidance of specific practices;
- Help create the ranking criteria for applications;
- Better understanding of soil health and water quality connections.





Lake of the Woods

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Projects, 2023





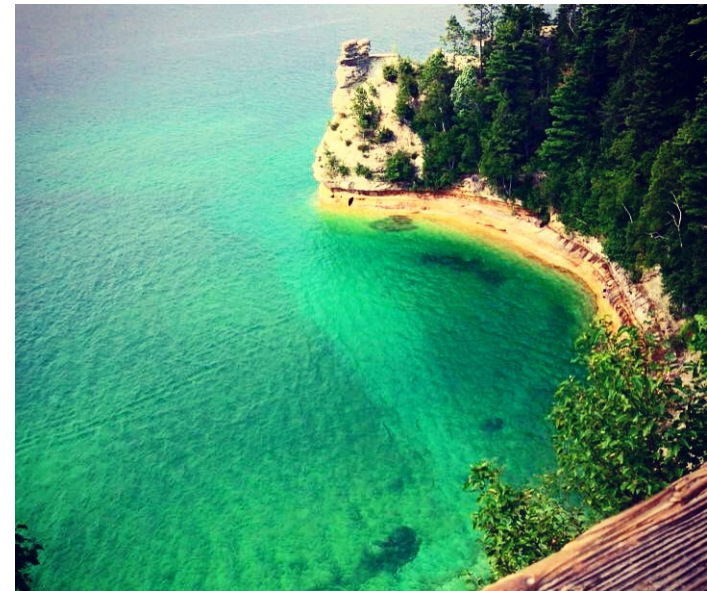
# GLRI Summary of Accomplishments 2010 – 2022

- NRCS has received over **\$305M** in EPA GLRI Funds.
- Over **\$157M** of GLRI funds were obligated into conservation contracts.
- **\$13.8M** were obligated into over **95** conservation agreements with partners at the state level.
- **Over 3,600** GLRI-funded contracts to apply conservation.
- NRCS has assisted farmers implement conservation practices on over **803,500 acres**.
- Over **1.7 million pounds** of phosphorus reduced in the GLRI Priority Watersheds (Action Plan II and III estimates only).
- Over **500** Conservation Nutrient Management Plans
- Over **730,000 acres** of Nutrient Management









# Agency Contacts



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