



Great Lakes Protection Fund

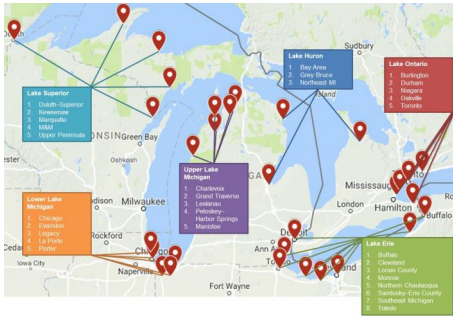
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Funded Project

Great Lakes Community Foundations Water Initiative -- Phase 2

Project No.	1130.01
Timeline	2017 – 2020
Award Amount	\$1,030,000
Team Leader	Council of Michigan Foundations



Developed through a [project design award](#), this team expanded the ability of the region's shoreline communities to address aging water and wastewater systems, and the water quality and human health challenges posed by these systems. The team included 27 shoreline community foundations, community water managers, regional leaders, and technical experts—who identified infrastructure challenges, accelerated innovation, explored new financing strategies, and built community will to support necessary improvements to grey and green infrastructure.

The 27 community foundations worked together in six regional clusters (Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Upper Lake Michigan, Lower Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario, and Upper Great Lakes) to build new programs around water that address the water infrastructure issues in their respective communities. During the project, each regional cluster prepared, and began to implement, an action plan that identified infrastructure challenges—water quality, financing barriers, use of green infrastructure, rate structures, water literacy, etc.—that exists in each community, and created a list of deliverables and timeline for action.

Building the human infrastructure needed to advance green/grey infrastructure improvements begins with the regional teams. Community foundations are clustered into six regions for the purpose of collaborating on the development of regional action agendas that will address the suite of common water infrastructure issues.

During the project design grant, the team met with over 50 community foundations to lay the groundwork for this project. The team found such interest and enthusiasm for this project that they had to limit participation (they had expected to attract interest from 12-18 foundations, but found themselves with over 30 foundations interested).

This work builds upon a very successful earlier initiative the Fund and members of this team launched in the late 1990s. The Great Lakes Community Foundation Environmental Collaborative built new programs in 26 shoreline foundations, starting environmental programs and building donor networks. In this older initiative, Fund support was leveraged more than 14-fold, and this team is recognized as setting the standard for launching environmental programs in the community foundation field.