



Great Lakes Protection Fund

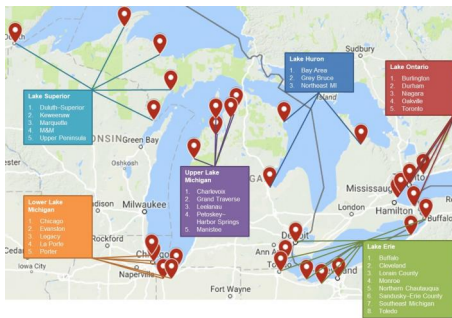
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Funded Project

Great Lakes Community Foundations Water Initiative – Phase 2

Project No.	1130.01
Timeline	2017 – Active
Award Amount	\$1,030,000
Team Leader	Robert Collier, Council of Michigan Foundations, rcollier@michiganfoundations.org
Project Website	https://www.michiganfoundations.org/greatlakesonewater



Developed through a [project design award](#), the team, led by the Council of Michigan Foundations, will expand 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 includes 31 shoreline community foundations, community water managers, regional leaders, and technical experts—to identify infrastructure challenges, accelerate innovation, explore new financing strategies, and build community will to support necessary improvements to grey and green infrastructure.

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.

The 31 community foundations will work together in six regional clusters to address the water infrastructure issues in their respective communities. These clusters are: Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Upper Lake Michigan, Lower Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario, and Lake Superior. During the project, each regional cluster will prepare an action plan that will identify infrastructure challenges—water quality, financing barriers, use of green infrastructure, rate structures, water literacy, etc.—that exist in each community. Each cluster will produce a list of deliverables, expected impacts and a timetable for action.

The six clusters will activate and grow regional networks, advance water literacy, broker new financing strategies, recruit new local donors, and build new programs around water. As they begin to execute their action plans, they will document what works, and share the lessons they learn. The lessons (and the products and strategies) will be documented and shared via a basin-wide learning network.

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 to 31 community foundations (they had expected to attract interest from 12-18 foundations).

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 widely recognized as setting the standard for launching environmental programs in the community foundation



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