



**Great Lakes Protection Fund**

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**Funded Project**

# Great Lakes Watershed Ecological Sustainability Strategy

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Project No.	936
Timeline	2009 – 2012
Award Amount	\$125,000
Team Leader	Joseph DePinto, Limno-Tech, Inc., <a href="mailto:jdepinto@limno.com">jdepinto@limno.com</a>

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The team's primary objective was to develop and test (in later phases) a science-based strategy for restoring Great Lakes watersheds. Called the Great Lakes Watershed Ecological Sustainability Strategy, or GLWESS, this innovative model would be able to target the specific placement and extent of restoration actions that would result in improved hydrology, water quality and the biological condition within a watershed. In this design phase, the team characterized the condition, causes of impairment and readiness to act in all 120 HUC-8 watersheds in the basin. Using this information the team assessed what strategies—if piloted—would have the best chance to make the biggest difference in the entire basin.

A key project outcome was the design of a pilot project and subsequent proposal to the Fund. In December 2011, the Fund made an [additional award](#) to build off the lessons learned here and design and test a set of transaction frameworks that will pay for water stewardship practices based on how well they reduce the release of nutrients and sediment from farmlands in Great Lakes watersheds. As part of this work, the team will develop key aspects of the GLWESS within agricultural regions of the Great Lakes where watershed hydrology is altered and nutrient and sediment runoff is a critical concern.