



Great Lakes Protection Fund

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## Funded Project

# Transforming our Approach to Generate Conservation Benefits from Agriculture

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Project No.	947
Timeline	2010 – 2013
Award Amount	\$622,000
Team Leader	Thomas Green, The IPM Institute of North America, Inc., <a href="mailto:ipmworks@ipminstitute.org">ipmworks@ipminstitute.org</a>
Project Website	<a href="http://www.ipminstitute.org/">http://www.ipminstitute.org/</a>

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The goal of this project was to reduce agriculture's contribution of nutrients, sediments, pesticides, and herbicides to the Great Lakes by expanding the list of offerings marketed by agricultural retailers to farmers to include higher margin conservation products and services that can, in part, displace fertilizer sales (considered to be a low margin business). The team piloted their approach in the Sandusky River watershed in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

This team was successful in developing new revenue-generating conservation products and services and successfully activating a network of agricultural retailers in the Sandusky River watershed to sell those products and services.

The team developed the following innovative tools to help retailers sell conservation products: field-level phosphorus loss risk maps; a *Phosphorus Loss Reduction Handbook for Agronomists*; wallet cards to help agricultural retailers and farmers identify high risk fields; "Sell Sheets" to improve retailer effectiveness in marketing key conservation products; and a unique nutrient calculator that allows retailers to run scenarios to estimate site-specific nutrient loss reduction and profit estimates for specific products and services at the field level. The project ended with a successful webinar series for agricultural retailers that reached 120 retailers throughout the Great Lakes basin.

During the project the team saw sizeable increases in nearly every conservation practice surveyed. In fact, sales of cover crops quadrupled in the watershed during the project. Through this work, in the project's final year the team was able to eliminate over 18,000 pounds of dissolved reactive phosphorus runoff.

They developed a website, <http://www.partnershipfarm.org> where others can learn about the project and download the products that they created.

In 2014, the Fund made a [subsequent award](#) to this team to expand the work to other nutrient-impaired priority watersheds in the basin including the Lower Fox River and Saginaw Bay.