



Great Lakes Protection Fund

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### Funded Project

# Watershed Ecological Sustainability Strategy—Transactions for Agricultural Ecosystem Services

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Project No.	936.01
Timeline	2011 – 2016
Award Amount	\$940,000
Team Leader	Dennis McGrath, The Nature Conservancy, <a href="mailto:dmcgrath@tnc.org">dmcgrath@tnc.org</a>
Project Website	<a href="http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/wholesystems/greatlakes/watersheds/Pages/glwess.aspx">http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/wholesystems/greatlakes/watersheds/Pages/glwess.aspx</a>

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Working directly with farmers.

Erie basin (MI/OH/IN).

In this project, the team designed and tested different transaction frameworks that would reward farmers by linking farmer payments to ecosystem improvements. Specifically the team: 1) designed and tested new ways to reduce drainage assessments for farmers keeping nutrients/soil on the land; 2) designed and tested new certification schemes for farmers and agricultural retailers to attract new payments for ecosystem services; 3) tested how watershed-based performance incentives can be added to Michigan's MAEAP program; and 4) tested the effectiveness of performance auctions at achieving ecosystem outcomes. The team piloted these transactions in the Saginaw Bay and Paw Paw River watersheds (MI), and in the Maumee River watershed in the western Lake

The team developed many important tools and products that can be found on the project website at <http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/wholesystems/greatlakes/watersheds/Pages/glwess.aspx>.