

REDUCING PHOSPHORUS (P) LOADS FROM AGRICULTURE:

DEMONSTRATING PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE CONSERVATION IN THE MILWAUKEE RIVER WATERSHED

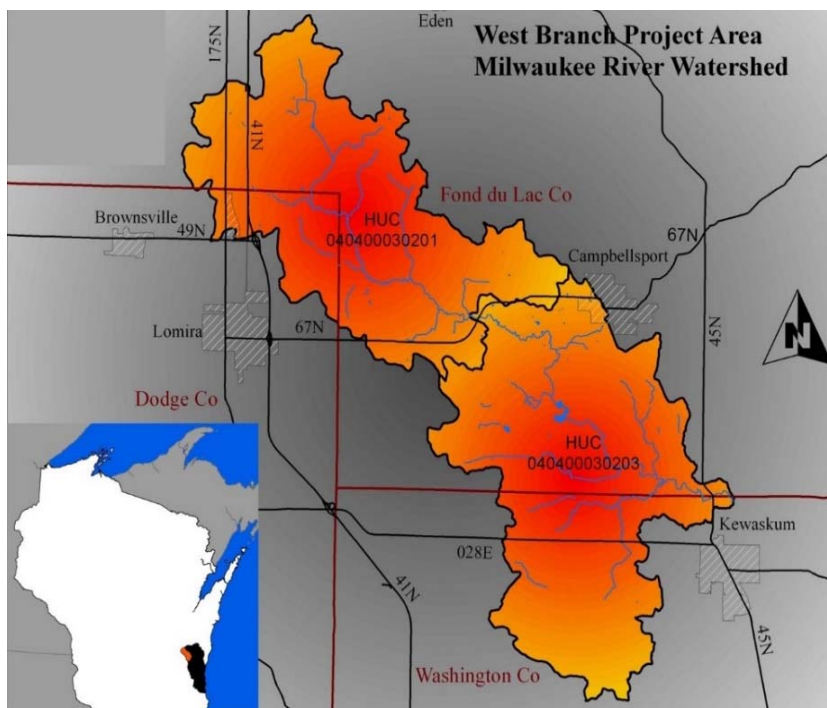


PROJECT GOAL AND BACKGROUND

The *Reducing Phosphorus (P) Loads from Agriculture* project will pilot an innovative approach to reducing phosphorus (P) loss from agricultural land by providing flexible, performance-based incentives that will benefit both farmers and the environment.

The three-year project will focus on the West Branch of the Milwaukee River, a 58 square-mile Wisconsin watershed, 40 miles northwest of Milwaukee. Approximately 75% of West Branch land is in agricultural use, which is typical of rural areas in the Great Lakes Basin.

Using a pay-for-performance approach, the project will pay participating farmers based on the amount of P loss they can reduce from their farms. The Wisconsin P Index will be used to estimate the level of P loss on each farm. The project will also work with wastewater treatment plants and other regulated sources of P loss in the Great Lakes Basin to generate demand for cost-effective P loss reductions from agriculture. This demand will perpetuate the rewards for the farmers, whose P loss reductions will in turn help improve water quality.



WHY USE A PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE APPROACH?

A pay-for-performance approach to conservation generates rewards based on the achievement of farm-level environmental performance targets. Farmers will earn the largest incentive payments from choosing the most effective actions for their specific fields. This approach is in contrast to current practice-based programs that limit flexibility and innovation; the practice-based approach provides cost-share for only a select set of best management practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Jonathan Winsten: 802-343-3037, jwinsten@winrock.org or Greg Olson: 920-923-3033 EXT. 128, golson@sandcounty.net. The project is led by [Winrock International](http://winrock.org), [Delta Institute](http://delta.org), and [Sand County Foundation](http://sandcounty.net), and funded by [Great Lakes Protection Fund](http://glp.org).

