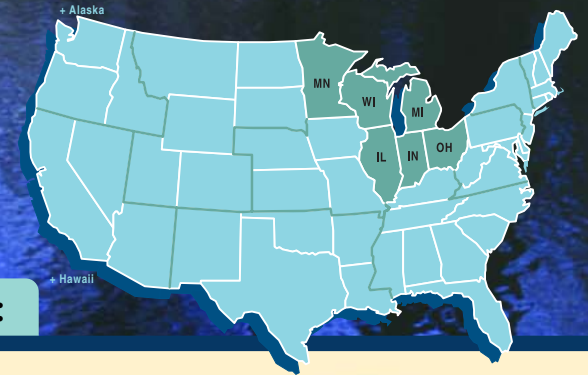




# New partnerships for regional water quality coordination in the Great Lakes region



four focus areas:



*Animal Waste Management*



*Nutrient & Pesticide Management*



*Watershed Management*



*Drinking Water & Human Health*

**The Great Lakes Regional Water Quality Leadership Team** focuses its efforts on those issues that cut across states in the region and are common to most state water quality Extension programs.

**The four focus areas** above are derived from the eight National CSREES Water Quality Program themes.



## The Challenge:

There have been several decades of water quality successes since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1970. However, over 40% of our nation's waters are still not meeting fishable and swimmable goals. The University and Extension systems are promoting and participating in collaborations among federal and state agencies, producer groups and private technical service providers, and non-profit organizations to address important water quality issues facing our communities today. These issues include reducing the number of impaired water bodies through watershed planning, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), CAFO/AFO management strategies, Great Lakes water quality, and hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

**The Great Lakes Regional Water Quality Program** builds on the strengths of the University Extension and Land Grant University programs that improve water quality management through research, outreach, and educational expertise. The six Great Lakes Region states (corresponding to EPA's Region 5) and universities are: University of Illinois, Purdue University in Indiana, Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin and Michigan State University.

## Goals of the Great Lakes Regional Coordination project:

- Increase coordination and collaboration across states in the region;
- Leverage University Extension and research resources across the region to address high-priority water quality issues;
- Strengthen regional relationships with federal and state agencies, producer groups and private technical service providers, and non-profit organizations and offer these groups a user-friendly access point to Extension and Land Grant University resources.

## Progress & Successes

### Internal Communication & Capacity Building

- Extension State Water Quality Coordinators in the Great Lakes Region have formed a Leadership Team. They meet and communicate regularly to set regional water quality programming priorities and share the perspectives of their state constituencies and respective Land Grant institutions.
- Results of a strategic planning session with a broader group of stakeholders are providing guidance to the Team and advisory Theme Teams that address the Region's four priority Themes. Advisory Teams are also being developed for specific projects including a regional stormwater management initiative and a training curriculum for professional conservation planners.

### External Communication & Capacity Building

- Joint listening sessions have been held with EPA and NRCS regional staff to enhance communication among the Regional Water Quality Leadership Team and agency staff, collaborate on evaluation of water quality outreach and practice implementation, and work jointly on publications and professional development programs.
- A Regional Water Quality Liaison converses and exchanges information regularly with agency staff and others engaged in water quality improvement efforts in the region.
- A regional website provides information about Team activities and useful links to other water quality-related efforts.
- Over \$6 million has been leveraged from participating Land Grant Universities, agency partners, and other organizations through activities of the Regional Water Quality Leadership Team and the Great Lakes Regional project benefiting participating partners and building the visibility and reputation of CSREES water quality programs.

## The national water quality program

of CSREES (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service) has a Regional Coordination component that seeks to ensure the integration of water quality efforts within the jurisdiction of each of the ten regions established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Regional Coordination Programs are designed to make research, education, and Extension resources of the university system more accessible to federal, state and local water quality improvement efforts. The National Water Quality Program has eight themes:

- Animal Waste Management
- Drinking Water and Human Health
- Environmental Restoration
- Nutrient and Pesticide Management
- Pollution Assessment and Prevention
- Watershed Management
- Water Conservation and Agricultural Water Management
- Water Policy and Economics

