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**Forest Service**

Northeastern Area State and  
Private Forestry

Web: <http://na.fs.fed.us/>



# News Release

Media Contact: Bob "Fitz" Fitzhenry

Voice: (603) 868-7685

[rfitzhenry@fs.fed.us](mailto:rfitzhenry@fs.fed.us)

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## **US Forest Service awards more than \$3.5M in grants to protect Great Lakes**

### ***Funds for trees and clean water go to projects in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin***

NEWTOWN SQUARE, PA – Water quality in the Great Lakes will get a boost this year, with more than \$3.5M in grants from the U.S. Forest Service. The funds will support local environmental restoration projects across five states.

"A good, thick tree cover is one of the best ways to protect clean water," said Jim Barresi, director of the Forest Service's Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry. "We're supporting plantings in communities and cities, and reclaiming barren industrial lands."

The grants are part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a cooperative effort between federal, tribal, state and local partners. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funding administered by the Forest Service backs local efforts to improve the collection, storage, infiltration, and evaporation of rainfall and storm water.

"Planting trees gives benefits beyond water and air quality," Barresi said. "Trees are the largest component of a community's green infrastructure, strengthening our connections to the landscape."

The awardees by state are:

#### **Illinois**

#### **\$199,061 - Historic Coastal Woodland Restoration at Van Vlissingen Prairie, Chicago**

The Chicago Park District will restore more than 12 acres of wooded coastal wetland habitat at Van Vlissingen Prairie, which is located in the historic Lake Michigan watershed in the Calumet region of southeast Chicago. This restoration work will include the installation of more than 60,000 native herbaceous and woody plants, including 735 trees, invasive species control, and general ecological maintenance that will provide critical ecosystem services in the form of stormwater management and pollutant filtration.

#### **\$100,000 - Openlands TreePlanters Program, Chicago**

Openlands, Inc., will plant 600 trees over the course of 30 planting events with a minimum of 750 participants to restore lost canopy and improve the City's green infrastructure, while building more resilient and connected communities and neighborhoods.

### **\$100,000 - Restoring Urban Forest Services After Emerald Ash Borer in Illinois**

The Morton Arboretum will partner to plant about 300 native trees in response to EAB-related losses in the communities of Chicago Heights, Des Plaines, Frankfort Square, Hazel Crest, Homewood/Flossmoor, Mundelein, Niles, Park Forest, Skokie, Tinley Park, Waukegan and Zion.

### **\$180,550 - Urban Forestry Solutions to Coast Areas of Lake Michigan**

The Wildlife Habitat Council will work to advance ecological restoration of industrial lands in the coastal zone of Lake Michigan. This project will treat 172 acres in the South Deering and East Chicago area with 1000 native trees and green infrastructure to reduce untreated runoff from working lands, and enhance 158 acres of coastal wetland habitat in the region.

## **Indiana**

### **\$100,000 - City of Fort Wayne Tree Canopy Restoration**

To address the loss of nearly 25% of its trees due to the EAB and reduce overflow events of its combined sewer system flowing to Lake Erie, the City of Fort Wayne will plant 550 trees in the Northside neighborhood and the Maumee and St. Joseph River watersheds.

### **\$100,000 - Northwest Indiana Regional Urban Forestry EAB Recovery Program**

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and partners will implement a competitive sub-award program that provides native trees to qualifying municipalities, counties, and non-profits located within the Lake Michigan Watershed. A minimum of four recipients will be selected for planting approximately 729 trees, on seven acres to mitigate canopy loss from emerald ash borer.

### **\$68,500 - Urban Select Bare-root Nursery Stock Project, Indiana DNR**

The Indiana Division of Forestry and Vallonia State Tree Nursery will grow 5,000 native trees for planting in the Great Lake communities of Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Whiting and other urban areas impacted by EAB.

## **Michigan**

### **\$100,000 - Grand Rapids Emerald Ash Borer Recovery Project III**

The City of Grand Rapids will address the loss of ash trees by planting 1,300 trees within City rights-of-way, parks, and other target areas. This will greatly enhance capacity to intercept stormwater runoff and filter out pollutants before they enter the Grand River and ultimately Lake Michigan.

### **\$188,000 - Green Macomb Urban Forest Partnership Implementation, MI**

Macomb County will support the planting of 1,000 trees on public property in areas of the Clinton River watershed protecting Lake St Clair. The Clinton River Watershed Council and ReLeaf Michigan will plant trees in high impact areas for water quality determined through GIS analysis.

### **\$200,000 - Innovation Park Remediation at Century City, Milwaukee**

The Northwest Side Community Development Corporation will plant 1,000 trees in a three acre brownfield site at Innovation Park to divert untreated runoff from flowing into Lincoln Creek, a tributary to the Milwaukee River. The trees also will treat shallow groundwater for benzene and other petroleum volatile organic compounds.

### **\$200,000 - Planting to Reduce Runoff into the Rouge River, Detroit**

Greening of Detroit will install a green buffer of 1,250 trees to reduce runoff into Rouge Park, Detroit's largest remaining natural area. The trees will capture 368,750 gallons of untreated runoff over five years and relieve an antiquated combined-sewer overflow system, which frequently exceeds capacity during wet weather events.

### **\$200,000 - Reducing Runoff at Chevy Commons: Phase III**

The Genesee County Land Bank Authority will continue efforts with County Parks and the City of Flint to reduce contamination and install a soil and vegetative green “cap” at the blighted urban riverfront once called Chevy in the Hole. The new “Chevy Commons” site will be a 60 acre community green space on the Flint River with grasslands, woodlands and wetlands interlaced with trails. Phase III redevelopment will include planting 369 trees to capture and slow stormwater runoff, continuing the application of phytoremediation and green infrastructure principles that have successfully reduced runoff into the Flint River and improved the quality of soil and groundwater at the site.

### **\$200,000 - Reducing Runoff into the Muskegon River Watershed, MI**

The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly will reduce runoff and improve water quality by planting 1,976 trees at three locations including 1) Clay Cliffs Nature Park in Big Rapids, 2) Bridgeton Township Park Boat Launch in Grant; and 3) in Muskegon coastal wetlands. The trees will contribute to habitat restoration and reduce surface water runoff by 582,920 gallons over five years.

### **\$199,695 – Three Lakes Coastal Habitat, Upper Peninsula, MI**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will work with Ontonagon, Menominee, and St. Ignace on the Upper Peninsula to plant 3,000 native trees, to improve 15 acres of terrestrial and aquatic habitat in the coastal zones of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and Lake Huron respectively. Each community has prioritized sites needing trees and green infrastructure to improve water quality, and reduce runoff and associated beneficial use impairments.

### **\$100,000 - Urban Canopy EAB Restoration in Detroit**

The Greening of Detroit will engage 625 volunteers to assist in planting more than 280 trees at Balduck Memorial Park, which will restore canopy cover, improve infiltration, and slow runoff from the three acre site.

### **\$100,000 - Urban Canopy Recovery in Marysville, MI**

The City of Marysville along the St. Clair River will plant 450 trees targeting low canopy areas of Marysville Park, Morton Park, Gratiot Avenue and residential areas heavily impacted by EAB.

### **\$100,000 - Urban Tree Canopy Restoration in St. Clair Shores, MI**

The City of St. Clair Shores will create eight acres of tree canopy habitat lost to EAB by planting 480 diverse trees to improve water quality flowing into the Clinton River Area of Concern (AOC).

## **Minnesota**

### **\$119,000 – Engaging Residents to Reduce Runoff into Lake Superior**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will work with the University of Minnesota and the cities of Grand Marais, Silver Bay, and Hermantown, to plant a minimum of 600 trees with community volunteers to reduce runoff along the shore of Lake Superior, the St. Louis Bay and St. Louis River.

### **\$194,825 - Stream Corps Restoration in the Lake Superior Coastal Zone, Duluth, MN**

Community Action Duluth will utilize under- and unemployed urban residents to carry out restoration projects at three sites along the St. Louis River estuary, including the planting of more than 8,000 pollinator friendly trees to restore native plant diversity and habitat structure on up to 34 acres of coastal wetland along a seven mile reach from Chamber Grove to Kingsbury Creek.

## **Ohio**

### **\$99,937 - Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation in Cuyahoga River Area of Concern, Cleveland**

Cleveland Metroparks will plant 630 trees in the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern, specifically in the Big Creek watershed and along the shoreline of Lake Erie in Gordon Park to restore canopy cover for water quality and coastal wetland habitat.

**\$100,000 - Mitigating Emerald Ash Borer in Cleveland, OH**

The City of Cleveland will plant 150 trees in the two neighborhoods of Cudell and Buckeye-Shaker Square, to mitigate the effects of EAB on Lake Erie. These targets were selected to serve as pilot model blocks for implementation of the Cleveland Tree Plan and help to reduce strain on the combined sewer system and frequency of combined sewer overflows.

**\$193,060 - Planting the Forest City's Vacant Lots and Metroparks to Protect Lake Erie, OH**

The Western Reserve Land Conservancy and national Student Conservation Association, in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks and the Davey Resource Group will implement reforestation projects on degraded urban sites to significantly reduce stormwater runoff, improve water quality, and increase the urban tree canopy in the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern. Approximately 3,700 trees will be planted where the maximum stormwater and co-benefits of trees can be realized.

**\$91,857 - Save Maumee Riparian Buffer II**

The Save Maumee Grassroots Organization Inc. (SMGO) will improve the health of the aquatic environment through installation of 3,600 linear feet of riparian buffers in the Trier Ditch, Bullerman Ditch, and Sixmile Creek drainage areas of the Maumee River, which are all considered critical targets for improving headwaters and reducing streambank erosion. The 1,390 native trees to be planted will result in 82,000 gallons/year of storm water captured and a total sediment load and associated nitrogen and phosphorus reduction of 329 tons/year.

**\$70,000 - Sherman Preserve Riparian Restoration, Cuyahoga County, OH**

The Chagrin River Watershed Partners will plant 3,000 native trees and shrubs across 13 acres of riparian stream habitat on the Sherman Preserve, an old farm field owned by Gates Mills Land Conservancy. Restoration of a forested riparian corridor will reduce an estimated 1.9 tons/year of sediment and capture a projected 885,000 gallons of untreated runoff over five years.

**Wisconsin**

**\$98,757 - Kenosha County Parks Reforestation Program**

Kenosha County Parks will help to mitigate the impacts of EAB infestation by planting 317 native trees in Petrifying Springs County Park located in the Pike River Watershed, following the recommendations of the EAB Readiness Plan adopted in 2013.

**\$100,000 – Native Tree Planting in the Milwaukee River Watershed**

The Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department will plant 5,200 trees to mitigate EAB impact in Mee-Kwon Park. Funding will support the 50 acre initiative including conservation corps members for tree planting to provide shading along Mee-Kwon Creek and adjacent wetlands, and improve fish and aquatic habitat as part of a nationally recognized Fish Passage Program.

**\$77,175 – Restoring Hardwood Forest and Wetland to Mequon Nature Preserve, WI**

Mequon Nature Preserve will create wetlands and prairie in a 72 acre area, while planting 6,000 native tree and shrub seedlings with the end goal of a hardwood forest habitat that will reduce erosion and agricultural fertilizers from entering the Little Menomonee and Milwaukee rivers. Residents from the Milwaukee area will assist in the restoration efforts resulting in reducing runoff by nearly 1.8 million gallons just in the first few years of establishment.

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The U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live. For more information, visit [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us).