

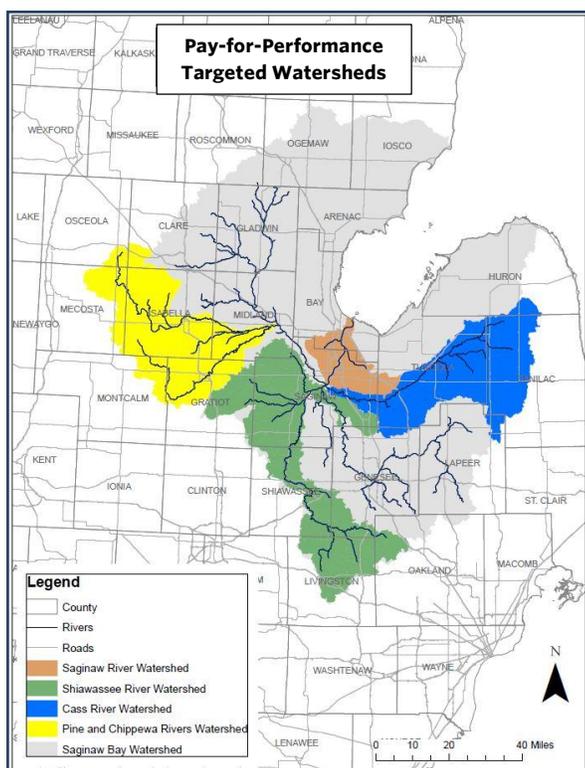
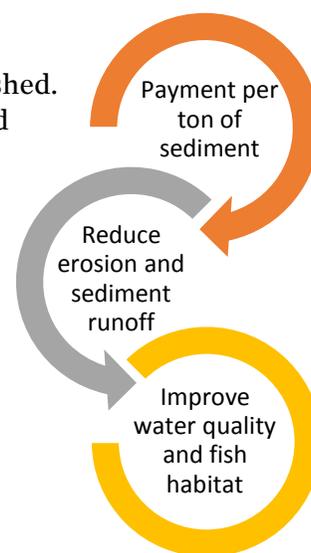


Pay-for-Performance Conservation in the Saginaw Bay Watershed

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Pay-for-Performance Conservation

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Pay-for-Performance (PfP) Project offers a non-traditional conservation funding option for farmers in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Through PfP, participants receive annual payments based on the sediment load reductions they achieve by implementing new soil conservation practices. Sediment loss from specific fields can be modeled online via the Great Lakes Watershed Management System, a web-based tool developed by the Michigan State University Institute of Water Research (MSU-IWR), to quickly and easily estimate the environmental benefits of proposed conservation practices. Using this tool, land managers can make field-level decisions to enter into a PfP agreement or not.



Saginaw Bay Watershed

The ecological health of Saginaw Bay and its tributaries is critically important not only to Lake Huron, but the entire Great Lakes ecosystem, supporting a diversity of fish, migratory birds, and other wildlife. It has the largest concentration of coastal wetlands in the Lake Huron Basin and serves as Lake Huron's most important source for several fish species, including walleye, and is home to some of Michigan's most productive farmland. One of the most significant impacts on coastal and inland freshwater habitats throughout the Saginaw Bay watershed is fertilizer and sediment entering rivers and lakes. With agricultural land use covering 45 percent of the watershed's land area it is crucial that we work to understand how to properly manage this land to balance agronomic and environmental needs. This project focuses on **four priority sub-watersheds: the Cass, Shiawassee, Saginaw, and Pine/Chippewa River watersheds.**

Funding Opportunities

The following best management practices are eligible for this project:

Cover Crops - Cover crops are grasses, forbs and legumes that when planted properly will provide cover during the seasons that soil is most vulnerable for erosion. They can also act as a nutrient trap and help suppress weeds.

No-Till - Utilizing No-Till on your ground can greatly reduce erosion and sediment loss. By planting directly into last year's crop residue you can save tillage cost, time, and help increase soil organic matter.

Reduced Tillage/Residue Management - By leaving at least 30% residue at the time of planting, erosion and sediment loss is greatly reduced. Payments will be based on actual residue measurement.

Filter Strips - Filter strips are grassed areas that help filter run-off before it reaches a water body. They also provide habitat for wildlife and help protect against stream bank erosion.

Forage and Biomass Planting - Taking traditional row crop ground out of production and planting forage in its place. This is a huge erosion and sediment loss saver. It also can provide pasture as well as habitat for wildlife. It can be harvested for livestock feed.

Conservation Cover - This practice involves planting grasses, forbs or legumes in areas that may have been row cropped. Providing permanent cover and habitat for wildlife, this greatly reduces soil erosion and sediment loss.

Riparian Herbaceous Cover - This practice is an area of grass or grass-like plants and forbs that are tolerant to intermittent flooding or saturated soils. This would act as a filter for sediment leaving the field and act as a wildlife habitat.

How to Enroll

Step 1: Those interested in the Saginaw Bay PFP program should contact the Sanilac Conservation District.

Step 2: After determining if your fields are within an eligible watershed, a Conservation District technician will use the Great Lakes Watershed Management System (GLWMS) to assess and select conservation practices. The GLWMS assessment will determine how much sediment can be reduced annually, which will be used to estimate an annual payment amount.

Step 3: If you would like to proceed with PFP, a contract will then be signed detailing everything that will be expected.

Payment Rates

- Producers are offered an annual payment rate of **\$150** per ton of sediment reduced.
- A **\$500** priority sub-watershed incentive will be given to producers with land in specified areas of impacted water quality.
- A **\$50** referral bonus will be given to producers who refer others into the program.

Contact

Sanilac Conservation District has a dedicated technician to help interested producers; please contact the office with any questions.

Megan Naplin,
Conservation Technician
Sanilac Conservation District
50 E. Miller Road
Sandusky, Michigan 48471
810-824-6253
Megan.naplin@maed.org

For more information please visit www.nature.org/saginawbaypfp.

