



Healthy Waters Coalition Update July 2015

The Healthy Waters Coalition is a diverse group of municipal and state water and wastewater organizations, and conservation and sustainable agriculture organizations working in Washington DC and in communities throughout the country. The Coalition is focused on strengthening links between our working agricultural lands and the quality of our Nation's waters with a specific focus on nutrients. Please feel free to circulate this list to your members and let us know if you have any colleagues who would find this monthly update informative. If you do not wish to receive these updates, we can remove you from our lists.

Below is an overview of the related press coverage and other materials from the month of July.

National Activities

[Up To \\$13.9 Million Available From EPA for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Projects](#)

EPA Press Release

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a Request for Applications soliciting proposals for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants to fund new projects to restore and protect the Great Lakes. Up to \$13.9 million will be available during the 2015 funding cycle for grants to state, tribal, interstate and local governmental agencies, institutions of higher learning and other nonprofit organizations. Applications are due September 28, 2015.

[EPA Report to Congress: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is Accelerating Great Lakes Cleanup and Protection](#)

EPA Press Release

During its first five years, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative implemented more than 2500 projects to improve water quality, clean up contaminated shoreline, protect and restore native habitat and species and prevent and control invasive species in the Great Lakes. That work, which began in 2010, is summarized in a new Report to Congress and the President.

State Activities

[Record number of farmers applied for conservation cost-share funds](#)

Augusta Free Press

Almost 1,500 Virginia livestock farmers have signed up for state cost-share funding to install conservation practices on their farms. Cost-share grants from the Department of Conservation and Recreation will help farmers voluntarily install stream exclusion fencing, which keeps animals from

drinking out of and wading into streams. The practice helps reduce soil erosion and nutrient runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

[Michigan reps introduce legislation to fight algae blooms](#)

Michigan Radio

Two U.S. representatives from Michigan announced at a farm near Monroe they plan to introduce legislation that would reduce pollution that causes harmful algae blooms in the Great Lakes. Republican U.S. Rep. Candice Miller of Shelby Township and Tim Walberg of Tipton will sponsor a bill, the Great Lakes Assurance Program Verification Act, that would reward farmers for voluntarily taking conservation measures.

[Illinois' New Plan to Reduce Farm Runoff](#)

WSIU

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) released the state's first ever Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. The document is the state's plan to decrease pollution of local waterways, the Mississippi River, and the Gulf of Mexico -- pollution caused in large part by fertilizer runoff from farmland.

[Ohio state improving water quality, one farm at a time](#)

AG Professional

Since last fall, 6,586 growers and producers responsible for farming some 1 million acres of Buckeye State farmland have gone through fertilizer applicator certification training offered by researchers from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University as part of the college's efforts to continue to improve Ohio water quality.

[Exclusive: Des Moines Partnership hopes to broker water agreement](#)

Des Moines Register

A Des Moines business group is offering to help broker a deal to settle a highly contentious water-quality lawsuit against three rural Iowa counties that has the potential to affect farming across the nation. Jay Byers, CEO of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, said Monday the regional economic development group wants to bring together business, farming, water, environmental and legislative leaders to find "long-term solutions" to Iowa's water-quality issues.

[Grants go to water-quality projects across Iowa](#)

Cedar Valley Business

Four projects focused on expanding the use and new delivery of water quality practices have been selected to receive \$3.06 million in funding through the Iowa water quality initiative over the next three years, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced last week. In addition to the state funds, the four projects will provide an additional \$2.59 million in matching funds to support water quality improvement efforts as well as other in-kind contributions.

Regional and Local Activities

[Experts: Trouble ahead for Lake Erie](#)

Detroit Free Press

Scientists predict one of the most severe outbreaks yet this summer of toxic algae blooms on western Lake Erie — the type that last August disrupted the water supply of 400,000 people in Toledo and southeastern Michigan. And while the region's drinking water is so far safe, acres of spreading green muck float around Toledo's water intake pipe on Lake Erie yet again.

[Large farm expansion under attack in Kewaunee County](#)

greenbaypressgazette.com

A crowd of people concerned about the environmental impact of large-scale farms urged the state Department of Natural Resources on Tuesday to deny a Kewaunee County farm permission to expand its dairy herd. Environmental groups and concerned residents say large farms are causing ground and surface water pollution because of the amount of animal waste they produce.

[Task force guides strategies along the Mississippi River](#)

Illinois Farmer Today

To shrink the growing dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico, the national Hypoxia Task Force (HTF) partners with 12 states in the watershed along with the EPA, Army Corps of Engineers and other organizations, to discuss nutrient reduction strategies. It also partners with land-grant universities, which have been essential for keeping farmers involved and providing them with information.

[Credit program explores new way to pay for farm practices](#)

Iowa Farmer Today

Farmers in Ohio, Kentucky and Southeast Indiana are part of the first interstate water-quality trading program designed to help fund new methods on the farm. In 2012, the three states signed a first-of-its-kind plan for water-quality "credits." Under the program, farmers submit proposals through their Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) to install water-quality practices on their farm. The practices are funded through cost share, with the trading program paying a cap of 75 percent of the costs.

[Chesapeake Bay report card: Progress on cleanup but challenges ahead](#)

Washington Post

Government officials leading a multi-state cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay pledged on July 23 to continue their efforts to reduce pollution in the watershed but acknowledged the difficulty of meeting their environmental targets for 2017. The executive council passed resolutions to support increasing the forest buffer on agricultural lands and plan a symposium on how to finance bay-restoration efforts. They also discussed how to decrease pollution from livestock waste and increase funding for state-by-state efforts.

Research and Studies

[Tulane opens \\$1 million 'dead zones' challenge](#)

AG Professional

Tulane University has announced the next phase of an international competition that will award \$1 million to the entrepreneur, researcher or inventor with the best plan to reduce the amount of crop fertilizer entering the world's lakes and oceans through storm water runoff.