

Project Outcomes

Restoration projects should be designed to meet one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Result in measurable improvements that meet the USEPA strategic targets, Sub-objective 2.2.1
 - i. Fully restore impaired water bodies that are [not attaining designated uses due to NPS causes](#).
 - ii. Remove at least one specific cause of water body impairment from impaired water bodies that are [not attaining designated uses due to NPS causes](#).
 - iii. Improve water quality in 12-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) subwatersheds in Michigan. Improved conditions mean that one or more of the designated use impairment causes are removed for at least 40 percent of the impaired water bodies within the subwatershed.
2. Result in measurable improvements in water quality in water bodies that are not meeting designated uses due to NPS causes.
3. Achieve or make substantial progress toward achieving the NPS load reduction targets of an approved TMDL or an approved watershed management plan in areas where a TMDL has not been developed.

Protection projects should be designed to meet one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Achieve or make substantial progress toward achieving the land use protection targets of an approved watershed management plan.
2. Result in measurable water quality improvement at NPS impacted sites in high quality watersheds.

Outreach and Education projects should be designed to meet the following outcome:

1. Result in measurable change in social indicators (e.g. awareness, behavior, knowledge) for targeted audiences in critical areas and focused on priority pollutants from the approved watershed management plan.

Areas of NPS Program Emphasis

Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure: The NPS Program is encouraging projects that Utilize LID and Green Infrastructure (GI) to address water quality and quantity issues under certain circumstances:

- Projects must be in watersheds with impairments caused by unstable hydrologic conditions.
- LID or GI must be identified as a high priority activity to address restoration or protection goals in the associated approved watershed management plan.
- LID or GI activities must be focused on critical areas and priority pollutants identified in approved watershed management plans.

Projects that appropriately and comprehensively use LID or GI practices to address water quality issues will be more highly regarded.

Targeted and comprehensive approach to farm conservation planning: To be most effective, agricultural BMPs must be implemented in a comprehensive manner and targeted to critical areas of the watershed.

Cropland Management Strategies: Higher priority will be given to proposals that meet the following criteria:

- Proposals that address sediment and nutrients from cropland (where there is no manure application) by implementing (at a minimum) the following NRCS practices on all farms receiving cost-share:

1. Nutrient Management (590)
 2. Residue and Tillage Management, no-till/strip till (329)
 3. Cover Crops (340)
 4. Filter Strips (393)
- The landowner may already be implementing some of the practices and agree to implement the remaining practices as part of the project.
 - Cost-share is only available for implementation of new practices and can include the required practices listed above or other new practices that are needed to restore and/or protect water quality.

Livestock Management Strategies: Higher priority will be given to proposals that address nutrients and bacteria from manure application or livestock operations by implementing the following practices (at a minimum) on all livestock farms receiving cost-share:

- Comprehensive nutrient management plan (includes no manure application on frozen or snow covered fields)
- Controlled/restricted livestock access to surface waters
- Residue and tillage management, no-till/strip till
 - For summer or fall manure applications, if tillage is needed for manure incorporation, a cover crop will be planted and no tillage will occur the following spring.
 - For spring applications of manure, if tillage is needed for manure incorporation, then no tillage shall occur the previous summer/fall and a cover crop will be planted during the previous summer/fall.
- Filter Strips

Drainage Water Management Strategies: A priority will be placed on proposals that promote drainage water management strategies in watersheds with appropriate soils and slopes as well as nutrient impairments or flow related impairments caused in part by tile line inputs.

Funding Priorities

Tier 1

Projects focused on water bodies on the 2016 Fiscal Year Targeted Water bodies list which implement the designated Priority Activities and meet one or more of the following outcomes:

- Restoration of impaired water bodies (Restoration Projects 1.i.).
- Removal of at least one specific cause of impairment from an impaired water body (Restoration Projects 1.ii.).
- Measurable water quality improvements in impaired water bodies or watersheds (Restoration Projects 1.iii. or 2.).
- Achieve substantial progress toward the land use protection goals of an approved watershed management plan (Protection Projects 1.).
- Measurable water quality improvement at NPS impacted sites in high quality watersheds (Protection Projects 2.).
- Successful outreach and education campaign indicated by measurable change in social indicators (Outreach and Education Projects 1.).
- LID and GI practices consistent with the program emphasis above.
- Targeted and comprehensive approach to farm conservation planning consistent with the program emphasis above.

Tier 2

Projects for any eligible water body that:

- Meet one or more of the outcomes listed for Tier 1.

- Achieve or make substantial progress toward the NPS load reduction target of an approved TMDL or watershed management plan (Restoration Projects 3.).

Tier 3

Other NPS projects which are consistent with the eligibility criteria and the NPS Program Plan.

Proposals meeting the criteria for Tier 1 will be considered for funding first. We may select good Tier 2 projects over Tier 1 projects that poorly address priorities. Tier 3 proposals will be considered last.