



Michigan's
Nonpoint Source
Program

Federal Clean Water Act
Section 319/CMINPS Grant
#2012-0033

"A Village to Discover"



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Improving Water Quality in the South Branch Watershed

October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2016

This innovative project is in the headwaters of the Paw Paw River Watershed in Van Buren County. The South Branch Watershed contains 37,500 acres, with 64% of that in agricultural use. South Branch and Eagle Lake Drains are listed in the Integrated Report as impaired by sediment and nutrients from bank erosion and agricultural runoff. Traditional Farm Bill programs, a drain assessment reduction program and a special pilot payment program (financed by the Village of Paw Paw) were offered to farmers to incentivize the adoption of management practices that reduced polluted runoff. Practices included cover crops, no-till and wetland restoration.

Social monitoring was conducted to understand the opportunities and challenges with farmers adopting new management practices. The Van Buren Conservation District implemented an education campaign along with one-on-one assistance to farmers to encourage adoption of agricultural best management practices.

Grant Amount: \$278,400

Match Funds: \$163,000

Total Amount: \$441,400

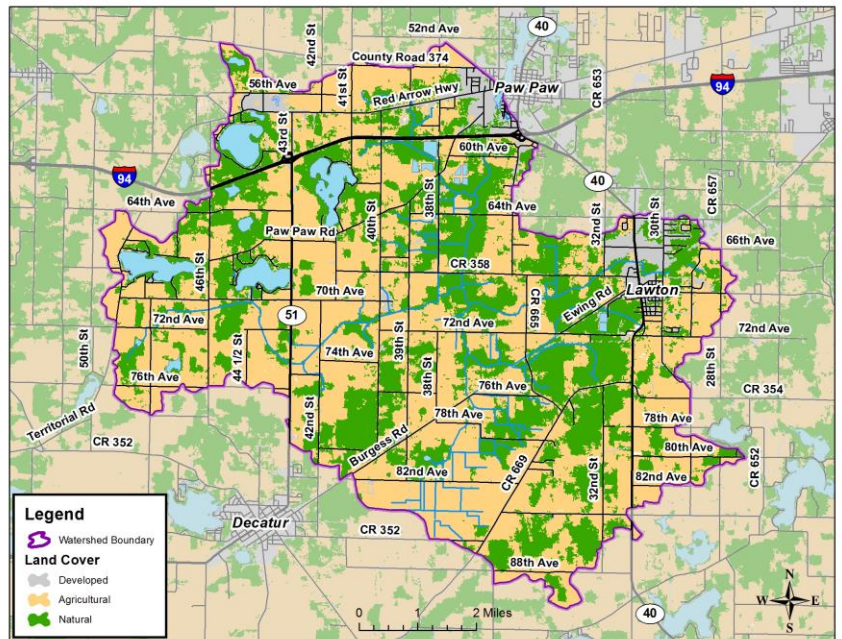
Best Management Practices:

- 2,422 acres of cover crops
- 690 acres converted to no-till
- 382 acres converted to reduced till
- 22.2 acres of wetland restoration
- 22-acre conservation easement
- 11 Crop-A-Systems
- 1 MAEAP verification completed/5 started



Annual Load Reductions:

- 570 tons of sediment
- 668 pounds of phosphorus
- 1.383 pounds of nitroaen



I&E Activities:

- One-on-One Technical Assistance
- Field Days
- Mailings
- Press Releases
- Brochures
- Newsletters



Partners involved:

- Maple Lake Association
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Two Rivers Coalition
- Van Buren Conservation District
- Van Buren County Drain Office
- Van Buren County Farm Bureau



September 30, 2016



A farmer discussing a wetland restoration/floodplain reconnection and conservation easement on his property with project partners.



A 22-acre conservation easement signed between a landowner and Van Buren County Drain Office.



Before/During: This site had three drains connecting a wetland area to the Eagle Lake Drain.



After: The drainage pipes were removed, eliminating the direct connection between the wetland and the Eagle Lake Drain. This restoration reduce runoff volume and sediment and nutrient loading.



No-Till corn planted into soybean and ryegrass stubble.



Cover crop - cocktail mix (drilled August 2015).