



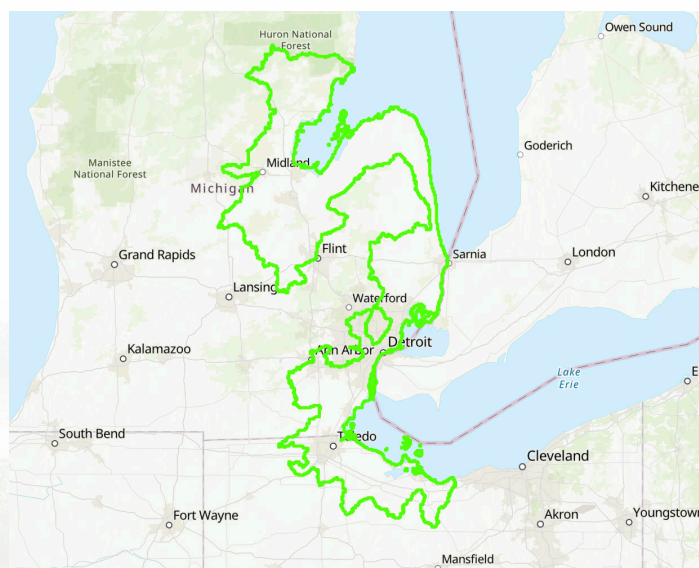
## What is it?

The Blueprint is a regional conservation strategy for protecting, enhancing, and restoring wetlands from the thumb region of Lake Huron to western basin of Lake Erie. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife is leading the development of the Blueprint in collaboration with many partners. The Blueprint identifies and describes priorities for conservation activities and public engagement in the region.

## Why wetlands and why this geography?

Glacial plains in this region once supported expansive coastal and inland wetlands, but there has been significant loss of wetland acreage over the past four decades. Protection and restoration of coastal wetlands provide essential benefits:

- » **Healthy, intact coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes support many important ecosystem functions**
- » **Capturing excess nutrients from upstream sources**
- » **Carbon sequestration**
- » **Shoreline protection**
- » **Habitat for culturally and economically important wildlife**
- » **Recreation opportunities**



Coastal project Boundary of Decision Support tool.

## The Vision

A system of Great Lakes coastal wetlands supporting economic, social, and environmental needs in coastal communities in the Saginaw Bay to Western Lake Erie geography.

### » **Goal 1**

A system of Great Lakes coastal wetlands containing a balanced assemblage of species and providing for the needs of specific priority species at desired population levels.

### » **Goal 2**

A system of Great Lakes coastal wetlands with diverse wetland type representation having hydrologic and other wetland processes within the natural range of variability.

### » **Goal 3**

Identify and enhance, through conservation, the economic and social benefits Great Lakes coastal wetlands provide.

## Mapping Support Tool

The Blueprint includes a GIS-based decision support tool that can help conservation planners and local decision makers assess current wetland conditions and identify opportunities to protect and enhance existing wetlands, restore former wetlands, and/or gather additional data to support regional wetland conservation. The mapping tool also incorporates layers that highlight social and economic needs of the region's residents.



## Wetland Conservation in Action

Pointe Mouillee State Game Area is a 4,040-acre state game area managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) at the confluence of the Detroit and Huron Rivers. Before MDNR ownership, the original infrastructure was built for agricultural production. Over time, waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species' use of the area declined significantly as a result of habitat degradation brought on by an eroding dike system and invasion by Phragmites. The ongoing Pointe Sec Coastal Wetland Project is the third unit restoration project on the property supported through cooperative agreements between Ducks Unlimited (DU) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Midwest Coastal Program. When complete, the Pointe Sec Coastal Wetland project will result in 15 acres of enhanced coastal wetland habitat. Collectively, the partnership between DU, MDNR, and the USFWS Midwest Coastal Program will achieve three independently managed emergent coastal wetlands totaling 122 acres.

## Partners

The SBWLE Blueprint was developed by a network of Conservation Partners. Please visit our website for a complete list of organizations.

