



Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
The Conservation Fund
P.O. Box 734
Bay City, MI 48707
www.saginawbaywin.org

News Release

For Immediate Release: Sept. 26, 2016

Contact:

Michael Kelly, Director Great Lakes Office
The Conservation Fund – Saginaw Bay WIN Program
989-501-9909
kellym@conservationfund.org

Eric Dunton, Wildlife Biologist
Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge
989-777-5930 ext 103
Eric_Dunton@fws.gov

Grant from Saginaw Bay WIN Supporting Pilot Cattail Harvest Project at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

\$10,000 grant will remove nutrients from river system by harvesting cattail, and then research the feasibility of using those plants to supplement fertilizer on local farms

A new grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) is helping managers at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR) in Saginaw County engage in a research project that includes the harvesting of cattails and reuse of that biomass on local agricultural land. This project is a critical first step toward developing an environmentally sustainable invasive plant and nutrient management strategy for the Saginaw Bay Watershed. The objective of the project is to determine the nutrient value of the harvested cattails (which uptake nutrients including - nitrogen and phosphorus -and “hold” them from the marsh) and recycle those cattails as “fertilizer” on local agricultural lands, thereby eliminating additional fertilizers that may be required that can ultimately run off into the river systems. Additionally, the removal of invasive cattails at certain sites at the refuge will increase plant biodiversity and improve habitat for fish and wildlife species. Harvest crews and specialized harvest equipment are onsite this week. SNWR is one of only three locations in the Great Lakes region where this research is taking place.

“We’re excited that we can support this project at Shiawassee” said Michael Kelly, Great Lakes Director of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers the Saginaw Bay WIN project. “Communities across the Great Lakes are struggling with invasive plant species such as invasive cattail and other plants such as phragmites. This might provide us with a new and better option for dealing with these invasives, and potentially lead to an economically viable alternative to their disposal. Removing these plant species from the marsh also removes the nutrients that lead to persistent water quality problems in Saginaw Bay and the river systems.” continued Kelly.

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) is a collaborative, community driven quality of life initiative created by a variety of environmental, business and community interests in 1996. WIN was formed to create a more sustainable future for all who live, work and play within the Saginaw Bay watershed. One of the ways in which WIN accomplishes this objective is by providing financial support to projects that link the economic, environmental and social needs of the region. Key WIN funding partners include: Bay Area Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation, The Dow Chemical Company Foundation, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, S.C. Johnson Fund, the Cook Family Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation and the Saginaw Bay Foundation. Since its inception, WIN has awarded in excess of \$5 million to more than 260 projects across the region. More information on WIN is available at www.saginawbaywin.org or by calling 989.892.9171.