

ACPF USE EXAMPLE: Stony Creek and Wolf Creek watersheds outside Detroit

Q&A with Caitlin Lulay, E.I. formerly with LimnoTech.
Updated by Derek Schlea, P.M. at LimnoTech

How were the ACPF results used within the watersheds?

The ACPF was used by LimnoTech and partners when developing watershed management plans for the Stony Creek and Wolf Creek watersheds outside Detroit. The project was funded through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) watershed planning grants awarded in 2021 to the Washtenaw County Conservation District and the River Raisin Watershed Council.

As a part of the watershed management plan, we outlined the key pollutants in the area, major sources of nutrient pollution, and the best management practices that could be implemented to reduce pollutants and reach the goals for the watershed. We used the data provided in the ACPF—crop rotation, distance to stream, and slope, among others—to generate a list of fields that should be prioritized and the practices that would have the highest impact on reducing nutrient losses. That data was then used to outline a strategic plan of action to reduce nutrient loads and meet water quality goals.

How did the ACPF fit into the watershed planning process?

Our team at LimnoTech took the ACPF results to our partners at the River Raisin Watershed Council and county conservation districts and discussed the watershed goals, and how different practices could be implemented and prioritized to help meet those goals. We then worked with conservation district staff to ground truth the ACPF and better understand which producers in the watershed were open and excited to implement some of the conservation practices outlined in the ACPF. Both steps helped our team develop the watershed management plan in a strategic way that can be executed in the future to get more practices implemented on the ground.

Who ran the ACPF? Who shared the results?

The ACPF had already been run by Michigan EGLE and the Environmental Working Group. University and NGO partners then connected our team to the results. We then used the ACPF results as a part of the watershed management planning process for the two watersheds in question.



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How was the ACPF used?



Facilitates targeted conservation

Using the ACPF, we were able to have a lot more detail on which fields the team should focus their efforts on, and which practices would have the biggest impact. Without the ACPF, the watershed management plan wouldn't have been as targeted or prioritized.

What about the ACPF made it helpful?

The ACPF helped our team make a list of fields that met our outlined criteria—i.e., had a certain percent slope, was a certain distance to a stream, and used a crop rotation that was particularly vulnerable to nutrient runoff. This enabled us to generate a list of all the fields in the watershed that had the greatest likelihood to contribute watershed pollutants.

What tips or advice would you give to others working with the ACPF?

There is a lot more value in the ACPF data than you see at first glance! Wade slowly as you first get into it, but don't underestimate the value that is there. The User's Manual is a fantastic resource.

For more information and learning resources, visit acpf4watersheds.org

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Cover pages of the final watershed management plans for the Ottawa-Stony North and Upper Wolf Creek watersheds.



Water sampling and flow monitoring activities taking place in the Upper Wolf Creek watershed.

Photos by Derek Schlea, LimnoTech

