



Hemp Pilot Part of \$9.88 million grant in Lake Decatur Water Quality Initiative

NHA Helps Facilitate Winning Grant Application

Press Release

For immediate release

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After being awarded a \$9,883,117 federal grant, the City of Decatur is moving forward with a major [water quality improvement plan](#). The grant comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that leverages partner resources to advance innovative projects that address climate change, enhance water quality, and address other critical challenges on agricultural land.

The [National Hemp Association](#) (NHA) and [Hemp Innovations Foundation](#) (HIF) will provide technical assistance, in-kind partner contributions and a cash contribution over the 5 years of this project. We will work alongside the City of Decatur and the [Illinois Hemp Growers Association](#) to implement a Climate-Smart hemp pilot program within the larger project.

This pilot will consist of planting hemp within targeted sub watersheds and land parcels. The effort will accelerate the hemp industry in Illinois and demonstrate the positive environmental and economic benefits. We strongly believe hemp can become a viable crop in the Midwest and be effectively integrated into a farming system largely dominated by corn and soybeans.

"The NHA and HIF truly believes this private/public partnership initiative addresses the key drivers impacting water quality, the barriers farmers face when transitioning to new management systems, and the innovative strategies that will provide long-term benefits beyond the life of the project.", said Erica Stark, Executive Director of National Hemp Association and Hemp Innovations Foundation.

"The Illinois Hemp Growers Association is excited to hear that plans for the RCPP Lake Decatur Water Quality Initiative have been approved. The grant funding for this project gives an opportunity for hemp to be highlighted as a proven ally to farmers and the environment. We are committed to contributing our resources to this project throughout its entire life cycle to drive innovation in this space. We expect to see novel developments on the impact of hemp on water quality as a result of this first of its kind project." said Rachel Berry, Founder & CEO of The Illinois Hemp Growers Association.

Lake Decatur Water Quality Initiative's overall objective is to collaborate with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and 53 partners to help farmers and landowners adopt Climate-Smart practices. The goal is to achieve measurable and quantifiable improvements in water quality, specifically reducing sediment and nitrates, in the Mississippi River Basin Critical Conservation Area which includes the 926-square-mile Lake Decatur watershed. The project aims to reduce up to 50% of the sediment and 20% of the nitrate nitrogen annually flowing into Lake Decatur.

"This is an exciting opportunity to continue our efforts to improve the water quality in Lake Decatur," said Jennifer Gunter, Watershed and Lake Manager. "We greatly appreciate the voluntary participation of our 53 grant partners who are critical to the success of this 5-year-long initiative."

About the National Hemp Association:

NHA is rooted in the knowledge that hemp can provide a wide range of opportunities, from field to factory, and has a global Total Addressable Market (TAM) of 15 trillion dollars. Hemp has an important role to play in creating a better and more sustainable future and for hemp to reach its potential, we advocate for sensible public policy and regulation. We are also facilitators in building reliable supply chains by seeking out others we can work with to further our mutual objectives as well as connecting people and businesses to help them reach their individual and collective goals.

NHA is a Grass Roots Advocacy organization celebrating our 10th anniversary in 2023!

www.nationalhempassociation.org

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