

Collaborative Formed to Increase Number of Conservation Finance Deals

CHICAGO/WASHINGTON D.C.: January 5, 2022: The [Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform](#) and the [Conservation Finance Network](#) today announced a new partnership to grow the number of deals that seek to generate environmental improvements with financial returns for investors. The partnership will create a “playbook” to help developers prepare projects for investment and investors to bring their approaches to bear to increase the number of deals, increase the standardization of investor requirements, and expand the resulting environmental impact. This playbook will include lessons learned from projects that have already successfully attracted investment and specific ways that the Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform (Platform) and Conservation Finance Network (CFN) can reduce or eliminate barriers to investment and increase deal flow.

More than \$17 trillion in assets under management are currently directed to sustainable, responsible and impact investing in the United States. Globally, sustainable investment now tops \$35 trillion – an increase of more than 50% since 2016. At COP26, financial institutions pledged to mobilize more than \$130 trillion "aligned with the Paris Agreement" to transition the global economy toward net zero emissions. However, the amount of capital seeking to achieve both environmental improvements and financial returns greatly exceeds the availability of investable projects. In general, project developers are not aware of investors’ requirements for recognized standards and financial returns. At the same time, investors are often not aware of local conditions and incentive programs that might enable a project. By showcasing unrealized opportunities, this partnership aims to help unlock the capital required to drive essential investment in environmental improvements.

Leigh Whelpton, Executive Director of CFN:

“The Great Lakes region has an excellent competitive advantage for conservation-oriented investment. Together with the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, we’re after collective intel that could mobilize more projects and capital allocations to working lands, human health and equity, and nature-based solutions on climate and water.”

The Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform showcases projects aiming to deliver demonstrable environmental improvements and financial returns in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region. Projects fall under four themes – agriculture, forestry, energy, and water - and use a variety of innovative financing tools like green bonds and pay-for-success models. By highlighting these projects, the Platform seeks to attract more impact investment in the region and encourage the development of other similar projects. One major barrier to this effort is the lack of executable deals.

David Naftzger, Executive Director of the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers, said, “By collaborating with the Conservation Finance Network, the Great Lakes Impact

Investment Platform can help to drive more and better sustainability projects that benefit our region.”

Media contacts:

Mike Piskur
Program Manager
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors &
Premiers
(773) 573-2884
mpiskur@gsgp.org

Leigh Whelpton
Executive Director
The Conservation Finance Network
(513) 520-6101
lwhelpton@conservation-finance.org

About the [Conservation Finance Network](#): CFN advances land and resource conservation by expanding the use of innovative and effective funding and financing strategies. By building robust partnerships, enabling new tools, and supplying insight, guidance, and backbone support to the field, CFN increases the financial resources deployed for conservation.

About the Platform: The [Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers](#) launched the Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform in 2020 with The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Smart Infrastructure Finance and the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan. The Platform showcases regional projects that aim to deliver environmental benefits and financial returns. It is working to position the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region as a global destination for investments that boost climate resilience, reduce emissions and create other environmental benefits.

Since its launch, the Platform has attracted more than 30 projects totaling over \$4 billion in value from across the region. Environmental outcomes include the saving of 14 million kilowatts of power and nearly two million tons of carbon, among other benefits. The impacts delivered by projects align with ten different United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Disclaimers: The information contained in this communication does not constitute investment advice in any form. Neither CFN or the Platform are an investment advisor and neither CFN or the Platform provide any advice on the financial merits of any financial structure or investment strategy referenced in this communication, nor should any information in this document be relied upon in making any investment decision.

Developers and sponsors of investment products and strategies participating in the Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform are not affiliated in any way with the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the States, or Provinces. Developers and sponsors are responsible for the management of those investments.