

Ted Strickland, Governor
Ed Hammett, Executive Director

One Maritime Plaza, Fourth Floor
Toledo, Ohio 43604
(419) 245-2514 lakeerie.ohio.gov

Contacts: Ed Hammett, Executive Director at (419) 245-2514

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*OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION AWARDS NEARLY \$59,000 IN GRANTS TO
FOUR ORGANIZATIONS CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE LAKE'S
WATERSHED*

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission has awarded a total of \$58,881 to four research projects that will benefit Lake Erie and its environmental and economic resources.

The **U.S. Geological Survey** will receive \$15,000 to research the use of microbial source tracking in the Portage River Watershed to determine if this tracking can differentiate between cattle and human fecal contamination. Results will be used to monitor the possible impact of confined animal feeding operations, septic systems and treated wastewater on water quality within the watershed.

Bowling Green State University will receive \$14,300 to conduct a winter assessment of Lake Erie microbiology via a six-day research cruise on a Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker in February. This project will test the theory that high algal biomass in the dead of winter is responsible for a lack of oxygen in the Central Basin in summer.

The **Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc.** will receive \$15,000 to conduct a bioswale demonstration project in Orange Village. The project will determine the level of pollutant removal as stormwater infiltrates the soil. This project is performed in conjunction with a USEPA funded demonstration project on barriers to widespread implementation of low-impact development practices. This project also addresses the goals of the Balanced Growth Initiative.

The **University of Toledo** will receive \$14,581 to track fecal pollution in the area of Huntington Beach and Porter Creek. Researchers will test the theory that Porter Creek is the predominant source of pollution to Huntington Beach and its contribution is increased by rainfall. Water samples will be collected between April and September from the Bay Village storm sewer network, Porter Creek and along Huntington Beach. These samples will be tested for *E.coli*. A DNA fingerprinting technique will allow researchers to match *E.coli* communities at the beach with their source.

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These quarterly grants are limited to \$15,000 or less each and were generally awarded for one year unless the specific nature of the project warranted a longer time period. Small grants may be used as seed money to test the feasibility of larger research projects or to support other small projects. Small grant proposals are reviewed and selected at each quarterly meeting of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

The commission was created to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, enhance its water quality and promote economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the departments of transportation, development, health, agriculture and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The commission oversees the Ohio Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is the source of grant funding. This fund is supported by Ohioans each time they purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse as designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

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