

For Immediate Release  
April 14, 2015

### **Lake Erie License Plate Proceeds Fund Projects within the Watershed**

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) awarded three quarterly grants through Ohio's Lake Erie Protection Fund at the commission's March meeting in Columbus.

The fund was established to help finance research and projects aimed at protecting, preserving and restoring Lake Erie and its watershed. The fund is supported by Ohioans through tax-deductible donations or purchase of a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse or the Lake Erie life preserver.

Grants were awarded to:

- **Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc.** – \$6,770 to update the Lake County Stormwater Utility Fee Credit Manual and research the potential implementation of a fee credit program. The need for a revised manual arose due to increasing storm water management costs for communities, along with the increased implementation of green infrastructure. Benefits of manual development extend beyond Lake County, as numerous local governments seek options for funding solutions to aging infrastructure, impervious surfaces and flooding issues.
- **Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization** – \$14,890 to establish a portfolio of land-based restoration sites within the Cuyahoga River Navigation Channel that will contribute to the enhancement and improvement of the fish habitat system. The project will combine the land-based sites with in-stream sites contributing to a comprehensive habitat restoration plan for the most industrialized section of the navigation channel. In-stream sites will be selected through an earlier phase of work currently underway.
- **Cleveland Museum of Natural History** – \$15,000 to restore at least 10 acres of habitat in Mentor Marsh, more than 900 acres of wetland along Lake Erie dominated by the invasive plant phragmites. Effectiveness of techniques to manage phragmites will be evaluated, including a comparative analysis of cost-reduction methods. The project will pursue a "power from restoration" method, whereby phragmites biomass is harvested for energy production. Restoration and management methods, results and experiences will be shared on a website, enabling replication at other wetlands.

All donations and proceeds from the sale of Lake Erie license plates are used to fund grants to benefit Ohio's Great Lake. Citizens may make tax-deductible donations directly to the Lake Erie Protection Fund by sending a check to the commission office at 111 E. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870.

OLEC was established to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, protect the quality of its waters and ecosystem and promote economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the state departments of Transportation, Health, Development Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources and four additional members appointed by Governor John Kasich.

For more information about the Lake Erie Protection Fund or to read about past grant projects, visit: <http://lakeerie.ohio.gov/>.

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