

For Immediate Release  
April 15, 2014

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

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) awarded four quarterly grants through Ohio's Lake Erie Protection Fund at its 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 donations or purchase of a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse or the Lake Erie life ring.

Grants were awarded to:

- **The Ohio State University** – \$15,000 to develop a sensitive, rapid, user-friendly method to determine microcystin levels in water samples. This algal toxin detection method provides multiple advantages over traditional methods. It is more sensitive, has a broader detection range and is faster, simpler and more cost-effective.
- **Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments** – \$15,000 to prioritize vacant land sites in the Toledo area suitable for various types of green infrastructure using computer mapping analysis and collaboration with community partners. Benefits will include building regional momentum to implement green infrastructure and building local knowledge about storm water retrofit and site redevelopment potential.
- **Rocky River Watershed Council** – \$15,000 to incentivize the establishment of vegetated riparian corridors on private residential property in targeted areas of the Rocky River watershed. Streamside plantings and reforestation will be completed on approximately 32 residential properties (about 2 acres or 3,500 linear feet of riparian buffer).
- **Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District** – \$14,980 to monitor the Upper Maumee River subwatershed streams. Monitoring will be conducted by trained volunteer teams who will collect data streamside. Report cards on each of the subwatersheds will be produced and utilized as educational outreach tools by district staff.

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 donate 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 for the purpose of preserving Lake Erie's natural resources, protecting the quality of its waters and ecosystem and promoting economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the state departments of Transportation, Health,

Development Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources and five additional members appointed by Governor Kasich.

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

- 30 -

***For more information, contact:***

Rian Sallee, Ohio Lake Erie Commission  
(419) 621-2040

Dina Pierce, Ohio EPA  
(614) 644-2160