

Lake Erie Protection Fund- Final Report

Project ID Number: SG 135-01

Project Director: Marc Grossman, Community Organizer, Ohio Environmental Council

Project Title: Assisting Local Watershed Efforts in Northeast Ohio- Year 2

Payment Address: 1207 Grandview Ave., Ste. 201, Columbus, OH 43212-3449

Purpose of Grant: To foster the formation of a self-sustaining Northeast Ohio Watershed Council by strengthening Northeast Ohio watershed groups through capacity building/educational workshops and networking events.

Problem Statement:

In recent years, attention to watershed issues has increased tremendously. Nearly thirty years have passed since the Clean Water Act was voted into law. Primarily as a result of the regulation of point source pollutants from industry and waste water treatment plants, water quality in Ohio has improved. Yet, according to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), in Ohio over 50 per cent of total stream and river miles, approximately 881 waterways, are still impaired. Environmental planners and regulators now recognize non-point source pollution as the primary barrier to better water quality. Increased attention to non-point source pollution has heightened the need for public education projects.

Local watershed groups are well-situated to lead public education projects that address non-point source pollution. Watershed groups share a similar mission in that they involve and educate all stakeholders identified in a watershed in order to effectively protect and preserve that watershed resource. The Great Lakes Commission has set a goal of reducing suspended sediments by 67 per cent. Watershed groups provide local vehicles to promote non-point source pollution reduction activities such as: conservation tillage, pollution prevention, stream bank stabilization and/or the monitoring of construction sites. In order to serve as a conduit of information, watershed groups must be organized and sustainable.

Over 100 watershed groups exist in Ohio. Over 20 are based in Northeast Ohio. Although many new watershed groups have been established, they often are new to grant writing, fundraising, working with public officials, membership development, community organizing, media events, and strategic plan development. Watershed groups need these skills in order to realize success. Many watershed groups learn these lessons individually, rather than learning from their peers and through interaction with more

experienced governmental and non-profit organizations. In addition, many watershed groups feel overwhelmed by topics related to Clean Water Act Section 401 & 404 permits, NPDES permits, easements, Total Maximum Daily Loads watershed restoration plans, and the process by which land use decisions are made. Urgent efforts are needed to train local groups how to efficiently respond to non-point source pollution before the degradation of small streams and direct tributaries that feed into Lake Erie result in irreversible declines in water quality.

Goals and Objectives:

The tools Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) provides to Northeast Ohio watershed groups enable them to become sustainable and achieve their habitat and water quality goals. Ohio is entering a new era, one that must address all pollution in order to meet state water quality goals. Local watershed groups play a key role in the reduction of these pollutants in the Lake Erie watershed. Through education efforts and advocacy, watershed groups often serve as the impetus to stream protection ordinances, storm water stenciling activities, and long ranged plans to restore and protect the watersheds they represent. However, watershed groups need the proper training and tools to work with watershed stakeholders and form independent sustainable watershed organizations.

The goals and objectives identified in the project proposal included:

- Unite the Northeast Ohio watershed groups with appropriate governmental agencies and organizations that can assist the watershed groups in their efforts via the Northeast Ohio Watershed Partners Networking Meeting. Watershed groups can tour tabletop displays and participate in round table discussions with agency and organization staff as a means to improve organizational profile and facilitate information sharing.
- Develop an Assistance Directory to unite Northeast Ohio watershed groups with the appropriate governmental agencies and organizations that can assist them in their efforts to achieve sustainability and work with other relevant stakeholders. This Directory includes a bibliography of plans, studies and reports available for each watershed.
- Assist the creation of a citizen-based watershed group for the Euclid Creek watershed capable of bringing local stakeholders together to create a watershed action plan to restore and preserve Euclid Creek.
- Lay the foundation to foster the development of the Northeast Ohio Watershed (NOW) Council.
- Provide capacity building seminars at three separate workshops. The seminars will be for "Increasing Membership," "Increasing Knowledge of Issues Affecting the Water Quality in Northeast Ohio Watersheds" and "Working With Public Officials and Legally Permissible Activities for Non-Profit Organizations." (Topics for these

workshops were taken from needs identified by the watershed groups during Year 1 of the Cleveland Foundation Grant).

Methodology:

Based on OEC's experience to date, we believe it is important to assess the structure and purpose of existing organizations in the region that may provide similar services. Understanding the lay of the land among watershed groups, state agencies, and local and regional public entities is necessary to minimize duplicative efforts and ensure that all relevant and important stakeholders are part of the watershed planning process from the beginning.

In the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts in Northeast Ohio" project, OEC took time to get to know each watershed group. OEC then asked each group to identify ways in which OEC could assist their development. The networking meeting, three capacity building workshops and assistance directory were all by products of this assistance identification process OEC conducted in 2000 to initiate this project. Upon heeding the advice of watershed groups in Northeast Ohio, OEC began the implementation process. Simultaneously, OEC continued to build upon relationships with watershed groups already identified in the initial survey process and court new groups and individuals interested in watershed issues. Through the course of hosting capacity building workshops and networking events, OEC actively began offering services to network existing watershed groups through such things as "The Ripple Effect," an electronic newsletter for the Northeast Ohio watershed community. As a clearing house for information, OEC channeled new and developing watershed groups into this watershed oriented series of workshops and networking events.

OEC has the ability to assist with citizen-based watershed groups, while at the same time introducing them to relevant governmental and other non-governmental organizations that work on watershed issues. For example, in Central Ohio, it has taken OEC over three years to establish a Central Ohio Watershed (COW) Council. The COW Council consists of voting members and non-voting members. Citizen-based watershed groups vote on issues and items brought up at COW Council meeting, while governmental organizations utilize the COW Council as a place to express ideas and tap into citizen activism. Participating voting and non-voting members utilize the Council as a forum to exchange experiences and ideas. In addition, the COW Council functions as a formalized coalition to address regional watershed issues. OEC is confident that by the end of the third year, the Northeast Ohio watershed community will recognize itself as a loosely affiliated or formal council capable of helping to steer regional watershed issues and policy, in addition to providing key technical support and networking opportunities to fellow participants. This process of connecting and assisting existing and emerging watershed groups with each other as well as governmental organizations will foster the emergence of a strong and independent NOW Council.

Outcome:

OEC accomplished its project goal of strengthening watershed groups in Northeast Ohio while laying the foundation to foster the formation of a regional watershed council. By hosting capacity building workshops, networking events, working one-on-one with specific watershed groups and helping to launch new watershed groups in Northeast Ohio, OEC continued to assist in the construction of a strong watershed community. Those watershed groups that attended OEC sponsored events learned from the speakers and informational materials as much as they did from each other. During the course of the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts in Northeast Ohio- Year 2" project, OEC succeeded in drawing representatives from over 30 watershed groups in Northeast Ohio workshops. Many of these groups participated in more than one, if not all, OEC sponsored workshops and networking events. These workshops not only enabled participants to return to their groups with ideas for future success, but helped lay a foundation to foster the formation of a regional watershed council also known as the Northeast Ohio Watershed (NOW) Council. More generally, the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts" project generated greater commitment to watershed advocacy among existing watershed groups and provided a channel for unaffiliated watershed enthusiasts to get involved in the business of protecting and restoring their watershed.

During the first half of this grant cycle, OEC successfully hosted the "Northeast Ohio Watershed Partners Networking Meeting" on March 24th, 2001. The workshop offered participants an opportunity to network with each other, and government and non-profit organizations on watershed related issues. Thirty people representing 25 watershed groups attended the Saturday workshop to hear presentations on the opportunities and challenges of partnering with government organizations to protect and restore watersheds. Subjects visited during the workshop included: navigating the political challenges of watershed advocacy; GIS watershed mapping; Phase II storm water rules and opportunities for citizen participation; partnering with parks to preserve riparian buffers and stream corridors; watershed groups' roles in shaping land use policy; Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) watershed restoration plans; and implications of the US Supreme Court decision on 'isolated' wetlands. (Northeast Ohio Watershed Partners Networking Meeting folder and materials were sent with the Interim Report)

Some of the participants at the "Northeast Ohio Watershed Partners Networking Meeting" also had attended the "Clean Water Act Training" Conference on January 26-28, 2001, hosted by OEC and River Network in Columbus, Ohio. The Tinkers Creek Land Conservancy and two emerging watershed groups representing the Rocky River and the Vermillion River participated in the comprehensive workshop on the rules and regulations of programs implemented as a result of the Clean Water Act. At the Clean Water Act Training Conference participants learned about their legal right to submit comments on CWA Section 401 US Army Corps of Engineers and Ohio EPA permitted projects that allow for "dredge and fill" activities in the state's waterways on a case by

case basis. Participants also learned strategies to utilize in submitting comments and/or presenting at public hearings held by the Ohio EPA or US Army Corps of Engineers on these water degrading projects. Those watershed activists from Northeast Ohio who attended the "Clean Water Act Training Conference" later submitted numerous comments on "dredge and fill" projects including the Hopkins Airport Expansion and Heritage Development Company's proposals to erect large malls in Bainbridge and Parma. (OEC comments on "dredge and fill" permits for the Hopkins airport expansion, First Interstate mall and Bainbridge Heritage Development projects are attached. Also note that the Clean Water Act Conference: Activist Training Handbook was sent with Interim Report)

On June 26th, 2001, OEC hosted the "Building and Retaining Your Membership" workshop at a Cleveland Heights Public Library meeting room. The four hour workshop presented emerging and established watershed groups ideas for sustainable organizational development. Over 35 people representing over 25 different organizations attended the workshop. Presentations included: "Why take the membership route?" by Vicki Deisner, Executive Director of the OEC; "Building membership- Membership recruitment tactics and database creation" by OEC's Development Manager, Susan Studer King and Development Coordinator, Sarah Hovanec; and "Promotional material review" by Susan Studer King and Vicki Deisner. ("Building and Retaining Your Membership" workshop materials are attached)

1. Vicki Deisner led participants through the "Why take the membership route" session. Vicki supplied reasons why 501c(3) organizations depend on unrestricted funds to be sustainable. She explained OEC's work to develop its membership base as a way not only to raise funds, but also as a source of volunteer activism and to develop a base of constituents. Vicki also provided workshop participants with alternative models to funding non-profit watershed or conservation groups.
2. Susan Studer King began the "Building membership- Membership recruitment tactics and database creation" section by explaining different tactical models for recruiting new members and retaining existing ones. One model she explained, the "fundraising ladder," revolves around building a membership base that slowly progresses from slightly active to very active or small donor to large donor. Susan also shared successful and unsuccessful direct mail pieces with participants. Sarah Hovanec demonstrated how to create a data-base that meets the special needs of watershed and conservation groups.
3. Susan Studer King and Vicki Deisner facilitated an exchange of organizational literature and direct mail pieces between participants. The "promotional material review" gave participants an opportunity to compare their organizational promotional pieces with those of others. This unique opportunity to share promotional materials provided participants with ideas on how to improve their public relations, and build and retain their membership base.

On Monday, September 10th, 2001, close to 25 people representing 16 different watershed and conservation groups attended the Northeast Ohio Water Quality Conference in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The conference provided a forum to discuss issues affecting water quality issues in Northeast Ohio. Holly Tucker, an Ohio EPA Section 401 water quality permit reviewer, began the conference with a review of the state's water quality certification process and Ohio Water Quality Standards. Participants learned about the Ohio EPA permitting of projects that result in the 'dredging and filling' of 'navigable' waters of the state. Greg Nageotte, Coastal Non Point Coordinator for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, presented on Ohio's Coastal Non Point program and then led an objective prioritization exercise to help determine what objectives the program will focus around. Jamie Radesi, Program Associate of the Citizen's Environmental Coalition's Western New York Office, presented on the educational use of a ground water table model to explain ways to protect ground water from pollution. Finally, Keith Dimoff, Water Program Manager for OEC, spoke about current watershed legislation in the Ohio State House and expanded on the benefits of a regional watershed council. (Northeast Ohio Water Quality Conference materials are attached)

1. Holly Tucker led her session with a discussion about the Water Quality Standards in Ohio. She explained the criteria Ohio EPA uses in evaluating 'dredge and fill' projects that degrade water quality and gave participants recommendations to consider while preparing comments or organizing a campaign to stop a 'dredge and fill' activity. Holly also led an exercise in analyzing Ohio EPA Section 401 water quality certifications and answered questions about specific projects.
2. Greg Nageotte explained the need and the statute that authorized Ohio's Non Point Coastal Management plan. He spoke about the implementation plan and then led the workshop through an objective prioritization exercise.
3. Jamie Radesi trained the trainers on how to utilize a ground water table model to help illustrate to citizens and elected officials the importance of protecting groundwater. She utilized different colored dyes to explain where and when surface and ground water meet as well as how contamination sites interact with ground water.
4. Keith Dimoff explained the impact of how one recently passed bill, House Bill 231, would lessen existing protections for 'isolated' wetlands or wetlands not connected through surface water to adjacent waterways, in addition to a proposed bill, House Bill 320. House Bill 320 would roll back protections for the rest of Ohio's waterways under the auspice of consistency. Keith also explained how regional watershed councils, such as the Central Ohio Watershed (COW) Council, has been utilized to protect watersheds on regional and local levels.

The final workshop was delayed due in part to the September 11th tragedy. Nonetheless, OEC rescheduled the "How to Clear Legal Barriers When Building Your Watershed Group" workshop for Nov. 14th between 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm at Baldwin Wallace College. This final NOW Council workshop of the year covered the legal definition of lobbying,

legal organizational structures for non-profits to consider and a regional watershed council identification session.

1) John Pomeranz of Alliance For Justice provided the 15 participants representing 7 different watershed groups a legal definition of lobbying for non-profit 501c(3) organizations. He also explained aspects of financial accounting and record keeping non-profit organizations need to consider when engaging in activities defined as lobbying. John went on to legally define non-profit organizations such as 501c(3)s, 501c(4)s and Political Action Committees (PAC). Representatives from groups participating in the workshop presented various lobbying scenarios and questions to John that directly related to their organization's experience.

2) Marc Grossman of OEC lead participants through a regional watershed issue identification exercise. The exercise focused on goals a regional watershed council could help accomplish. Four topics were touched upon during the exercise: identification of physical water quality threats to Northeast Ohio watersheds; barriers that stand in the way of watershed groups accomplishing their goals; identification of watershed group needs a regional council could address; and issues a regional watershed group could address. (The first edition copy of the Assistance Directory, a copy of materials from the November 14th workshop and results from NOW Council identification exercise are attached.)

Ohio Environmental Council has compiled the *Northeast Ohio Assistance Directory for Watershed/ River Organizations* which includes contact information and mission statement descriptions of federal government, state government and local and regional government organizations pertinent to Northeast Ohio watershed groups. The Assistance Directory also includes contact information of other Northeast Ohio watershed groups and statewide conservation and environmental non-profit organizations. The Assistance Directory includes a bibliography of relevant studies and plans available to Northeast Ohio watershed groups. OEC will make an effort to update the Assistance Directory to account for staff changes and the emergence of new organizations that work with watershed related issues. Development of the assistance directory has undergone many changes since its initial conception this past Spring. First drafts of the assistance directory were distributed to numerous Northeast Ohio Watershed Council participants, whom submitted comments and suggestions. OEC acted on this feedback and will begin distributing the "Northeast Ohio Assistance Directory" to watershed groups whom participated in OEC workshops or other NOW Council events. At the final OEC workshop of the year, "How to Clear Legal Hurdles When Building Your Watershed Group," a copy of the revised "Northeast Assistance Directory" was distributed to everyone in attendance. Groups not in attendance will receive the Assistance Directory by mail.

In addition to hosting capacity building workshops, OEC helped launch new watershed groups in the Euclid Creek watershed and the Rocky River watershed.

Virginia Aveni of Lyndhurst, Ohio, stepped forward with an idea to form a watershed group around the Euclid Creek watershed. She asked OEC to assist with her efforts to launch "Friends of Euclid Creek." Over the course of the summer of 2001, OEC did outreach and organized meetings to discuss the Friends purpose and mission. From these meetings in libraries and university classrooms, the Friends of Euclid Creek decided to take two initial steps towards identifying their mission and expanding interest in the newly forming organization. Those steps included an effort to turn people out at an Ohio EPA public hearing on First Interstate, Inc.'s bid to develop a 67 acre mall on the banks of Euclid Creek in TRW owned property and the first annual "Euclid Creek Day." Friends of Euclid Creek used the public hearing to emphasize negative impacts the TRW development would mean to the stream's ecological and physical integrity and to increase its membership base. "Euclid Creek Day" on September 29th was utilized as a day of activities in and around the creek to promote watershed stewardship and give due recognition to the Euclid Creek as an important natural resource in the area. It is likely that Friends of Euclid Creek will also serve an important role as a citizen based group in participating in the newly created Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) sponsored Euclid Creek Flooding Council. The Euclid Creek Flooding Council was created primarily for municipalities and other governmental entities to discuss watershed management in a forum that represents the watershed's natural boundaries. Friends of Euclid Creek could play an important role in providing citizen voices to the process. In the coming weeks, Friends of Euclid Creek will decide whether or not it will incorporate as a 501 c (3). OEC will continue to play a valuable role in facilitating and heightening interest and organization in emerging watershed groups in Northeast Ohio. (Friends of Euclid Creek and Euclid Creek Day materials are attached)

Ohio Environmental Council helped draw interested citizens from the Rocky River watershed to an initial meeting recently staged by NOACA to organize the Rocky River Watershed Council. NOACA developed a project to bring municipalities, regional and state governmental organizations, businesses and citizens together to launch a watershed council for the Rocky River watershed. OEC has played a large role and will continue to play a larger role in fostering citizen participation in this broad based effort to advocate, protect and restore the Rocky River watershed. OEC identified Kathleen Bradley and Mark Boyette, local watershed enthusiasts, as strong and knowledgeable citizen leaders. Both are part of an effort to organize a citizen based watershed organization, the Rocky River Preservation Group, that will participate in the broader-based Rocky River Watershed Council. OEC will continue to work with Kathleen, Mark, the Rocky River Preservation Group and other citizens to help provide the Rocky River Council with citizen input capable of advocacy and principled negotiation. Furthermore, OEC worked with many citizens and groups on water diversion issues addressed in Annex 2001 amendment of the Great Lakes Charter. (OEC comments on the Rocky River TMDL, Rocky River Preservation Group web site are attached. Great Lakes Charter: Annex 2001 materials were sent with Interim Report)

To connect and inform members of the NOW Council about statewide and local watershed issues, OEC began distributing an electronic newsletter, *The Ripple Effect*, in June of 2001. *The Ripple Effect* provides a forum for watershed groups to publicize

events or gather support for campaigns. It also serves as a clearing house of information. The Ripple Effect normally includes news articles, legislative updates, upcoming workshops and other pieces of pertinent information that help connect and mobilize the watershed community in Northeast Ohio. In one instance, *The Ripple Effect*, was employed to distribute information about the establishment of Natural Resource Assistance Committees (NRAC) delegated by Clean Ohio Fund legislation to help decide on funding for proposed watershed restoration and green space projects. Through *The Ripple Effect*, OEC distributed information encouraging watershed activists to nominate qualified people for positions on the NRAC committees. In Northeast Ohio, at least 5 people active in the watershed community were nominated to sit on these influential committees. (Printed copies of *The Ripple Effect* are attached)

Concluding Summary:

OEC successfully implemented the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts in Northeast Ohio- Year 2" over the course of this past year. Through hosting a networking meeting, three capacity building workshops and the development of the "Assistance Directory for Northeast Ohio Watershed/ River Organizations," OEC helped to strengthen individual watershed groups and will continue to network groups through fostering the formation of the NOW Council. In addition, OEC successfully assisted the Friends of Euclid Creek organize into a self-sustaining citizen-based watershed group. OEC's successful organizing efforts won it credibility among governmental and non-governmental organizations in Northeast Ohio.

OEC's success organizing Friends of Euclid Creek and hosting capacity building workshops has helped gather buy-in from local watershed groups to participate in the emerging NOW Council. The formation of an independent, self-sustaining NOW Council will help foster new watershed groups and support existing ones. In addition, the NOW Council will foster networking and sharing between watershed groups in Northeast Ohio as well as play an important role in determining regional watershed based decisions. OEC's experience providing capacity building workshops and fostering the formation of a regional watershed council in Northeast Ohio has provided OEC a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience executing a project we intend to implement in each region of Ohio. Projects such as the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts" project help raise awareness and enable local watershed groups to address their region's water quality goals and objectives.

Budget:

Please refer to the attached Final Accounting Worksheet. All funds were expended as budgeted.

Matching funds on the Final Accounting worksheet represent funding by The Cleveland Foundation. Additional matching funds, not included on the worksheet, for portions of the "Assisting Local Watershed Efforts in Northeast Ohio- Year 2" were provided by the

Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Protection Fund and an Ohio Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Assistance Grant (ODNR-CMAG).

List of attachments:

- Final accounting worksheet
- “Results of the NOW Council Regional Watershed Issue Identification Exercise”
- “Building and Retaining Your Membership” workshop materials
- “Northeast Ohio Water Quality Conference” materials
- “Assistance Directory for Northeast Ohio Watershed/ River Organizations”
- “How to Clear Legal Hurdles While Building Your Watershed Group”
- Friends of Euclid Creek and Euclid Creek Day materials
- Rocky River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watershed restoration plan comments, Rocky River Preservation Group web page
- Printed copies of The Ripple Effect

Lake Erie Protection Fund

Final Accounting

	Budgeted Amount	Amount Expended	Amount Not Expended	Matching
A. Salaries and Wages	<u>\$3,400</u>	<u>\$3,400</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$16,900</u>
B. Fringe Benefits	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
C. Total Personnel Costs	<u>\$3,400</u>	<u>\$3,400</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$16,900</u>
D. Permanent Equipment	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
E. Expendable Supplies & Equip.	<u>\$3,500</u>	<u>\$3,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,260</u>
F. Travel	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$840</u>
G. Publications & Presentations	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
H. Other Costs	<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>
I. Total Direct Costs (C through H)	<u>\$7,500</u>	<u>\$7,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
J. Indirect Costs	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
TOTAL COSTS (I+J)	<u>\$7,500</u>	<u>\$7,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the grant expenditures listed and the description of the charges are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. These expenditures represent approved grant costs that have been previously paid for and for which complete documentation is on file.

	SIGNATURES	DATE
PROJECT DIRECTOR	<u><i>Mark Swanson</i></u>	<u>11/26/01</u>
AUTHORIZING OFFICER	<u><i>Judith Delano</i></u>	<u>11/28/01</u>
FISCAL AGENT	<u><i>Peter A. Johnson</i></u>	<u>11/21/01</u>

Lake Erie Protection Fund Final Accounting

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PROJECT DIRECTOR	<u><i>Mar Dosh</i></u>	<u>11/26/01</u>
AUTHORIZING OFFICER	<u><i>Debra J. D'Amico</i></u>	<u>11/28/01</u>
FISCAL AGENT	<u><i>J. J. ...</i></u>	<u>11/21/01</u>

Lake Erie Protection Fund

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AUTHORIZING OFFICER	<u>Debra J. Wilson</u>	<u>11/28/01</u>
FISCAL AGENT	<u>Jerry A. John</u>	<u>11/21/01</u>

