

For Immediate Release
December 22, 2014

Lake Erie License Plate Proceeds Fund Projects within the Watershed

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

Grants were awarded to:

- **John Carroll University** – \$15,000 to develop and test a water quality metric for algal phytoplankton in the Lake Erie nearshore area. The metric will be used to score the health of algal phytoplankton communities and the impacts of phosphorus. Researchers will use a numeric scale based on sensitivity values of organisms at each sampling site. The metric will serve as a tool for assessment of water quality along Lake Erie's nearshore.
- **The Ohio State University** – \$14,956 to compare composition, size and seasonal variation of fish species at three different water conveyance structures in Lake Erie coastal wetlands. The project will assess which structures provide the most efficient and cost-effective fish passages for wetland restoration purposes. Results will help inform management decisions related to maintenance of coastal wetlands for both water levels and fish access.

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 a tax-deductible donation 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 five 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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