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OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION AWARDS NEARLY \$20,000 IN GRANTS

TOLEDO , OH – Nearly \$20,000 has been awarded to two research projects that will benefit eastern Lake Erie and its environmental and economic resources, according to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

The Ohio State University Research Foundation will receive \$10,000 to establish a database for estimating the economic benefits to Ashtabula County that dredging the Ashtabula River will have on the area. Benefits to residential housing, recreation, commercial shipping and new business will be assessed. The project will supply evidence to evaluate dredging in other areas.

The Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization will receive \$9,465 for a project to prioritize wetland restoration opportunities in the Chippewa Creek Watershed. The project will aid in efforts to keep mitigation within the watershed, identify sites to maximize nonpoint source pollution and identify aquatic habitat restoration. It will also help address impairments to fish and wildlife habitat in the watershed. Information gathered will be incorporated into the Chippewa Creek Watershed Management Plan.

These quarterly grants are limited to \$10,000 or less each and are generally awarded for one year unless the specific nature of the project warrants a longer time period. Small grants may be used as

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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 either the Marblehead Lighthouse or the Toledo Harbor Lighthouse, as designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

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